

ABCFT 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 X @ #ABCTeachernews or [Facebook](#)
- [ABCFT 2023-2026 Strategic Plan Summary](#) **NEW!**
- [ABCFT 2023-2026 Strategic Plan Details](#) **NEW!**
- [Who are the officers for the ABC Federation of Teachers?](#)

KEEPING YOU INFORMED - Sick and Personal Necessity Days

By Ruben Mancillas



We have received questions regarding sick days vs. personal necessity days so here is a brief review:

Teachers and nurses are allowed ten (10) days of sick leave annually. Such leave, if unused, may be accumulated on an unlimited basis.

Teachers and nurses may use seven (7) personal necessity (PN) days during any year. This leave does not accumulate.

One way to look at this is to think that seven of our ten annual sick days can be PN days in any given year. Any unused sick days “roll over” into the next year just as any unused PN days essentially become sick days and are added to that member’s total number. So no days are lost.

For example, if I went into this 2024-2025 school year with 50 sick days accumulated from previous years, I would now add the 10 sick days allotted for this year. If, during this school year, I used three sick days and three PN days the remaining four unused days would be added to my total, and I would end the year with 54 days in my bank of sick days. But I would only have up to seven PN days in one year.

**KEEPING YOU
Informed**

Again, the total number of days for any given year equals ten. We do not receive ten sick days and seven PN days for a total of seventeen, but rather, we have a total of ten with the ability to designate seven of the ten as PN.

Sick vs. PN can feel like a distinction without a difference, but it is important not to use more than seven PN days in any year, as this will result in a financial penalty. If I have 100 sick days saved up but use an eighth PN day, my pay will be docked for that one day. So please be mindful of this when tracking your sick days and entering absences into the Frontline system.

In Unity,



More information about paid sick leave and personal necessity days can be found in the [ABCFT master contract](#) Article XXI pages 75-77.

JOIN THE TEACHER LEADER PROGRAM - Accepting Applications for ABCFT's Teacher Leaders Program

Deadline to apply has been extended to Friday, August 30, 2024

Have you ever seen a news report or talk show discuss issues around education, social and emotional issues, equity, or learning and thought to yourself or said to your colleagues, "*Why don't they just ask a real educator about _____?*"

The AFT Teacher Leaders Program is a union-sponsored program designed to help prepare **YOU** to be that classroom teacher, nurse, or speech and language pathologist facilitating discussion of the issues that affect our profession both here in ABC Federation of Teachers and nationally.



We are seeking teachers and nurses who would like to take an active role in influencing educational policy in, for example:

- Promoting children's well-being
- Supporting powerful learning
- Building capacity

- Fostering collaboration

We will provide participants with opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills to influence policy locally, statewide, and nationally. This will include framing practical policy positions related to improved student achievement, conducting research in classrooms and schools, engaging the public and elected officials in community conversations about education, participating on advisory boards, panels, and task forces, developing policy recommendations based on research conducted, and publishing and disseminating findings and recommendations nationwide. [Click here to apply.](#)



Members selected for the program will:

- **Increase their knowledge** of major challenges facing the teaching profession through readings and discussions with leading policy experts
- **Improve leadership skills**
- **Be recognized** by the public and media
- **Represent teachers** nationwide as spokespersons and become members of a nationwide community
- **Participate in conducting action research** and using it in influencing policy
- Be awarded up to a **\$1500 stipend** upon completion of the program

We are seeking a diverse group of teacher leaders who are active in their school community and have a track record of improving their schools. This program will take place monthly from September 2024 to April 2025.

The [Teacher Leaders application](#) is due no later than **Friday, August 30, 2024**. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Tanya Golden at ABCFT2317@gmail.com or [Patty Alcantar](#)

District Health & Safety Committee Meeting by Ray Gaer



One important communication committee formed during the COVID crisis of 2020 was the formation of the District Health and Safety Committee. What was then a weekly meeting has now evolved into a once-a-month meeting where representatives of all employment areas of ABCUSD can hear together about the state of the school district's health and safety issues. This committee comprises district cabinet administrators, human resource representatives, site administration representatives, nutrition services, classified representatives, ABCFT representation, and risk management.

Last week the district Health and Safety Committee met for the first time this school year and covered a number of important topics.

IMPORTANT

- “LOCK UP YOUR PERSONAL PROPERTY” is my advice concerning your personal property at the school site. A number of high-impact robberies occurred at one of the local high schools' media rooms, which will cost the district 40k in losses.
- There was discussion about the content, length, and timing of the Keenan videos and the changes in the content of the information presented.
- The District Safety Officer (newly hired in the Spring of 2024, a former career police officer who is knowledgeable about district safety and communication efforts with local law enforcement) is updating the district safety plan.
- Emergency Earthquake supplies are currently being ordered; ensure you have the supplies for your classroom emergency kits.

IMPORTANT

ABCFT will report monthly about what happens in the District Health and Safety Committee. If you have any questions related to health and safety please email ABCFT@abcusd.us

Politics in the Classroom



Politics in the Classroom *Must be appropriate to Grade and Subject*



Can I bring in information about issues or candidates?
Yes, if it relates to the curriculum you are teaching and you make every attempt to bring in fair and balanced information about the issues or candidates.

Can I tell students my position on issues or candidates?
Yes, if it comes up as part of a discussion of the course curriculum or as an answer to a student's question. Your answer should be age appropriate and should be given without trying to advocate for your candidate or issue. It is also appropriate to decline to state your position.

"It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate."

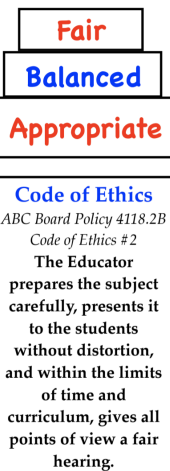
Quote from Supreme Court - 1969
Tinker vs. Des Moines I.C. School District

Academic Freedom (ABC Board Policy 4118.2A)

Academic freedom includes both freedom and responsibility in teaching and freedom in learning. Both the student and the teacher have certain rights and privileges in the common search for truth and the sharing of truth when found. Both are entitled to an educational climate in which a free movement of ideas can exist, within the limits of responsibility and law, the assigned subject area, the bounds of decency and the mental maturity of pupils.

August 2015 NPR Interview about *The Political Classroom: Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education*, by Diana E. Hess and Paula McAvoy.

"What we argue in the book is that what's most important is that teachers create a culture of fairness in the classroom. That means being fair and reasonable to all the competing views that are in the classroom and that are being represented in the public"



The state of politics is a tricky issue for any educator and our students have many questions about the political process and how it impacts their lives and communities.

We want to make sure that you are not only protected but that you are informed about what kind of conversations are appropriate in your classrooms. We've put together a flyer that helps to outline the basics of how to protect yourself about politics in your classroom.

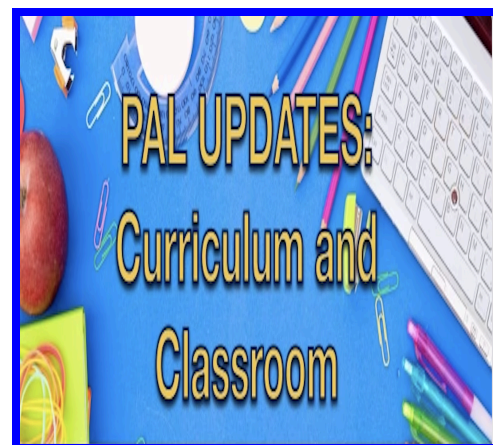
**Here is the
ABCFT flier.**



MEET YOUR ABCFT ACADEMIC SERVICES LIAISONS

ABCFT has partners across the district, which sets it apart from most educational unions. Our academic services liaisons have specific partners related to particular grade levels and/or programs. These ABCFT Executive Board members are vital to providing members with information and transparency. More importantly, they can give classroom teachers and nurses voices in district-level decision-making.

Our Elementary VP, Megan Mitchell, is our liaison for elementary curricular issues. Our VP at Large, Catherine Pascual, is our liaison for secondary curricular issues. Our VP of High Schools, Megan Harding, is our liaison for secondary PAL topics. Our VP of Special Education, Brittney Parker-Goodin, is our liaison for any special education PAL topics. Their photos and email contacts are listed below.



For Elementary curricular issues, please email Megan at Megan.Mitchell@abcusd.us



For Secondary curricular issues, please email Catherine at Catherine.Pascual@abcusd.us,



For Secondary PAL topics, please email Megan at Megan.Harding@abcusd.us



For Special Education PAL topic, please email Brittney at

Brittney.Parker-Goodin@abcusd.us

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. This weekly report informs members about issues impacting their working/learning conditions and mental well-being. Our work as a Union is a larger conversation and united we make the YOUnion.

I'm blanking on the writing today. Plenty of stuff is happening in the district and across the nation as we head toward the November elections. I'll just hit upon some of the things that are going on in the background that you may or may not be aware are happening..

For example, human resources accounts for ABC employees who have temporary or ongoing medical conditions. I've accompanied several ABCFT members over the past couple of weeks to ensure the process and

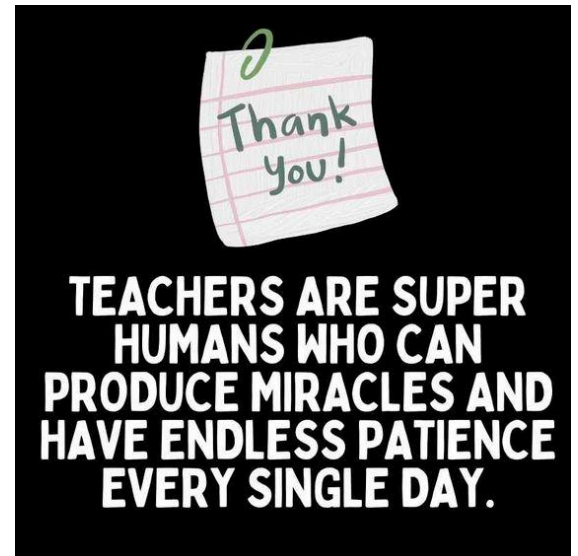
to answer the members' clarifying questions. Typically, the human resources invite the employee to an “interactive meeting” where there is a discussion about any health limitations needed to accommodate the employee so that they can continue to meet their job expectations. It is essential for both the employee and the district that there is a paper trail and evidence of the need for accommodations. As long as the accommodations needed are “reasonable” for the employer to provide the employee can continue to work. Therefore, if you have a medical condition or situation and have questions about the “interactive meeting” process, please contact ABCFT to provide that assistance before the meeting.

In a different sphere of my work, I have the fortune of sitting on several state and national committees. For example, this week, Superintendent Dr. Zietlow and I resumed our work for the “steering committee” for the California Labor Management Institute (CA LMI), an organization that facilitates labor-management training for school districts in California and the United States. Dr. Zietlow and I often use our influence in this committee to highlight ABC teachers and administrators' successful collaborative strategies and practices. ABC has a culture grounded in shareholder representation and voice, which is the main ingredient to universally improve a school district and improve working conditions, labor peace, and student outcomes. ABC is a founding member of the CA LMI and has been an active presenter since 2015 ([Click here if you are interested in knowing more about the CA LMI](#)). Through this organization, we are able to lift what you do for students so that other districts can learn from your practices.

A more recent group I am a part of is a national think tank committee for curriculum providers entitled the Research Partnership for Professional Learning (RPPL). This committee centered at Brown University is currently looking at the application of Artificial intelligence in Education, its impact, and its uses for teachers and students. AI technology is controversial but can also be seen as a tool to help with workload issues for those who use it effectively. This Monday, I gave a presentation to this committee, where I illustrated the growth of AI literacy in ABC, the process of developing key guidelines, and the current uses of AI programs in ABC. However, my most important message to deliver in these types of committees is that I highlight that teachers' unions must be a part of any district's use of Artificial Intelligence and, more importantly, that Artificial Intelligence should never evaluate teachers and students. As educators, we must fight to maintain the expectation that human intelligence, empathy, compassion, and ingenuity will never be replaced by a biased, unreliable technological tool. [Here is an article from the RPPL](#) Institute and from [my presentation on Monday](#).

I know that you always see how ABCFT advocates for all of you in the classroom, but as I stated to the ABCFT Representative Council earlier this month, “everything we do is negotiations” for ourselves and our students. Every committee you sit in, every casual conversation you have with a stranger about education, is a negotiation to keep public education alive for our students. Thanks, as always, for all you do each and every day. Have a great weekend!

In YOUinity,



Ray Gaer
President, ABCFT

**“Never underestimate a
public school teacher!”**



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](#)

AFT President Randi Weingarten spoke at the DNC on Thursday

https://www.youtube.com/live/nKNW_KHYrbY?si=jqT2ga-DSE1BgSMZ&t=1630

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



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

Poll: Americans Want Next President to Focus on Workforce Prep, Hiring Teachers

By [Linda Jacobson](#) August 21, 2024

Heading into a divisive national election, a new poll shows that when it comes to education, at least, Americans overwhelmingly agree that the next president should focus on two things: preparing students for careers and attracting top teachers who will stay in the profession.

“There are clear priorities that overwhelming numbers of Americans on both sides of the aisle can support,” said James Lane, CEO of PDK International, a professional organization for educators that administers the annual survey. “If I were a candidate for any office at the federal level, I would want to know those things that have broad support because they’re likely to have an opportunity for success.”

But beyond those narrow avenues of agreement, the country is separated by large partisan differences on issues from student mental health to paying for college. Eighty-six percent of Democrats want the next administration to focus on mental health and college affordability, compared with less than two-thirds of Republicans.

full article here [Poll: Americans Want Next President to Focus on Workforce Prep, Hiring Teachers – The 74](#)

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

Cellphone bans becoming more common in California schools

In response to rising concerns about smartphone addiction among students, California schools are implementing various restrictions on cell phone use. Troy Flint, spokesman for the California School Boards Association, noted: “There’s more scrutiny of the issue now than there was previously.” Gov. Gavin Newsom has urged districts to take action, citing that “excessive smartphone use among young people is linked to increased anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues.” Schools are adopting different policies, from requiring phones to be stored in electronic pouches to outright bans during school hours. While many educators support these measures, some parents express concerns about losing contact with their children during emergencies. The movement to restrict cellphone use is gaining traction nationally, with California potentially joining other states in passing legislation to enforce these bans.

[EdSource](#) [Press Democrat](#) [Redlands Daily Facts](#)

Biden administration raises pay for Head Start educators

The Biden administration is increasing pay for educators in the early childhood program Head Start to retain and attract employees amidst a workforce shortage. The new rules require large operators to ensure their

employees earn what their counterparts in local school districts make by 2031 and provide healthcare. Smaller operators must show progress in raising pay. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra emphasized the need for a decent wage to attract quality teachers. Many operators have had to reduce the number of children and families they serve due to staff shortages. Head Start teachers, who have bachelor's degrees, earn less than \$40,000 a year on average. The program, created in the 1960s, serves low-income families and aims to offer good-paying jobs. The requirements do not come with additional funding, raising concerns about potential cuts in slots. The administration exempted smaller operators from some requirements. The program is administered by nonprofits, social service agencies, and school districts.

U.S. News

DeSantis Reforms Losing Ground

In the recent Florida school board elections, Gov. Ron DeSantis faced significant challenges as many of his endorsed candidates lost key races. Out of 23 candidates he supported, at least 11 appear to have been defeated, marking a stark contrast to his success in 2022 when only five of 30 candidates lost. The elections, which are officially nonpartisan, saw intense competition between candidates backed by DeSantis and those supported by the Democratic Party and the Florida Education Association. Florida Democratic Party Chair Nikki Fried said: "Our freedom starts in our schools, and we're proud to have supported candidates who will fight for our students' rights." The results indicate a potential decline in DeSantis' influence following his withdrawal from the 2024 presidential race, as Democrats secured victories in several matchups.

[Politico](#)

Florida Gov. DeSantis battles for education control

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is intensifying his efforts to reshape the state's education system through school board elections, with a slate of 23 candidates he endorsed. "We want the best for our children," DeSantis stated, emphasizing a focus on student success and parental rights. The elections are seen as a precursor to a larger battle in November over a proposed constitutional amendment that would add party labels to school board races, potentially transforming them into partisan contests. The Florida Education Association has endorsed over 40 candidates, directly opposing many of DeSantis' choices. As the races unfold, candidates are navigating a landscape marked by culture wars and significant campaign financing, with some races becoming highly contentious. The outcome of these elections could significantly influence Florida's educational future.

[Politico](#)

Illinois bans corporal punishment in schools

Illinois is set to become the fifth state in the U.S. to prohibit corporal punishment in all schools, following legislation signed by Governor J.B. Pritzker. The new law, effective January, bans physical punishment in private schools while reaffirming a 30-year prohibition in public schools. State Rep. Margaret Croke emphasized the importance of this ban, stating, "I don't want a child... to have a situation in which corporal punishment is being used." The American Association of Pediatrics has called for an end to corporal punishment, citing its negative impact on children's mental health and cognitive development. Currently, 17 states still allow corporal punishment, but Illinois joins New Jersey, Iowa, Maryland, and New York in completely outlawing the practice. The law does not extend to home schools. Americans seemingly take a pragmatic view of the practice, said Sarah A. Font, associate professor of sociology and public policy at Penn State University. "Even though research pretty consistently shows that corporal punishment doesn't improve kids' behavior in the long run — and it might have some negative consequences — people don't want to

believe that,” she said. “People kind of rely on their own experience of, ‘Well, I experienced corporal punishment. I turned out fine.’ They disregard the larger body of evidence.”

[Washington Post](#)

Tennessee teachers hesitant about carrying guns in schools

Tennessee's new law allowing teachers to carry guns in schools has received a tepid response from educators. The law, which requires a mental health evaluation, training, and written authorization from law enforcement, also places sole liability on teachers for any incidents involving their firearms. Despite concerns about safety and a shortage of school resource officers, no school district has indicated plans to train teachers to carry guns. Critics argue that more guns in schools could lead to more harm and create prison-like environments. The law also includes provisions for confidentiality, preventing parents and educators from being notified if a teacher is carrying a concealed weapon.

[Chalkbeat](#)

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

California kindergarten bill fails again

California's recent attempt to mandate kindergarten enrollment for all families was rejected by the state Legislature. The proposed legislation, AB 2226, aimed to ensure that children attend kindergarten before entering first grade, although 95% of students already do so voluntarily. Over 14,000 students skipped kindergarten in the 2022-23 school year. Proponents, including Los Angeles USD and the California Teachers Association, emphasized the importance of early education, noting that kindergarten is mandatory in 19 states and D.C. However, the bill faced no formal opposition but was ultimately killed due to budgetary concerns, with Sen. Anna Caballero stating: "The lens we were looking through was the cost." California is grappling with a \$46.8bn budget deficit, leading to previous vetoes of similar bills by Gov. Gavin Newsom and former Gov. Jerry Brown. Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi, who authored the bill, expressed disappointment but remains committed to addressing the kindergarten enrollment gap.

[Press Democrat](#)

----- DISTRICTS -----

LAUSD's AI assistant Ed faces backlash

The **Los Angeles USD** (LAUSD) continues to face a pushback regarding its artificial intelligence (AI) assistant Ed, which was recently removed after concerns about data security and the effectiveness of the program arose. Cecily Myart-Cruz, president of United Teachers Los Angeles, emphasized the need for transparency, stating: "While we welcome technological advancements, it's crucial to engage in transparent discussions." Parents including Joanna Belson and Alicia Baltazar expressed their desire for more traditional educational resources, arguing that funds should be allocated to smaller class sizes and arts programs instead of AI. Experts, including Yasemin Copur-Gencturk from **USC**, raised doubts about AI's ability to enhance learning, highlighting that many tools lack a solid educational foundation. Despite the challenges, Robin Lake from the Center for Reinventing Public Education noted that AI still holds potential for transforming education, urging districts to proceed cautiously.

[EdSource](#)

Cuts to employee salaries and benefits discussed in Sonoma Valley USD

Sonoma Valley USD is considering various options to achieve a balanced budget and required reserve fund balance. Cuts to employee salaries and benefits were among the options discussed during a recent board of trustees meeting. The district's budget committee has suggested potential savings of approximately \$6m, but the approved expenditure reductions of \$675,000 for 2024-25 and \$941,000 are not enough to attain balanced budgets. The district aims to achieve a reserve fund larger than the mandated 3%. The proposed budgets for the next few years show deficits, and estimated fund balance reserves are low. The district has already made some cuts, but more may be necessary, including potential school closures. The board is prioritizing protecting direct services to students and maintaining competitive compensation for teachers while exploring cost-saving measures.

[Press Democrat](#)

SF public schools begin new year with optimism amid challenges

Monday marks the first day of school for nearly 50,000 San Francisco public-school students. However, **San Francisco USD** is facing a budget deficit that requires immediate corrective actions, including a hiring freeze, layoffs, and school closures. Despite the challenges, many parents and public-school advocates approach the new year with optimism. Eddie Kaufman, executive director of Mission Graduates, expressed a glass-half-full attitude and emphasized their commitment to equitable education. However, the necessary cost-cutting measures will deepen wounds for families that have already been affected by layoffs and staff shortages. Concerns have been raised about the impact on special-education students due to assistant-principal layoffs. The district is also exploring school closures, mergers, and relocations. The move is necessary to balance the budget, but transparency with affected families is crucial. Chronic absenteeism remains a concern, and efforts are being made to address the issue. The district's deep-seated homelessness crisis contributes to the problem. Despite the difficulties, there are silver linings to celebrate, such as the reintroduction of algebra classes and the commitment to student success.

[San Francisco Examiner](#)

Philly schools superintendent addresses district's teacher shortage

Tony Watlington, the Philadelphia Superintendent of Schools, is addressing the district's ongoing teacher shortage as he enters his third year in leadership. In a recent interview, he acknowledged that over 400 teaching positions remain unfilled, impacting around 14,000 students. Watlington stated: "If Tony Watlington showed up to teach a few social studies classes, I think they would still get some great instruction," highlighting his commitment to education. Despite improvements in test scores and graduation rates, challenges persist, particularly in high school academic performance. Watlington aims to enhance academic achievement, improve customer service for parents, and strengthen community partnerships. He emphasized the importance of attendance, noting that only 60% of students attended school 90% of the time last year. As the district prepares for a new school year, Watlington is focused on recruiting qualified teachers and implementing a new English Language Arts curriculum.

[Chalkbeat](#)

----- TECHNOLOGY -----

LAUSD's tech crisis demands action

Los Angeles USD (LAUSD) recently faced a significant setback when its tech provider for personalized report cards went out of business, highlighting the urgent need for effective technology integration in education. As learning gaps widen post-pandemic, the report "Wicked Opportunities: Leveraging AI to Transform Education" from the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) emphasizes the potential of artificial intelligence to address challenges like achievement gaps and teacher shortages. The report calls for strategic partnerships among educators, policymakers, and tech developers to create resilient education systems. It also stresses the importance of funding AI initiatives in low-income communities and implementing effective state policies to guide districts. The LAUSD incident serves as a reminder of the necessity for preparedness in technological integration, urging California to lead the nation in transforming education through AI.

[EdSource](#)

Newark superintendent to implement new curricula, expand AI tutoring

Newark Superintendent Roger León has unveiled a 10-year strategy to address the district's ongoing facilities needs and improve education. The plan, known as "The Next Decade: 2020-30," includes implementing new curricula, expanding artificial intelligence (AI) tutoring, and addressing emerging issues. In the 2024-25 school year, the district will use AI to inform teaching and learning, support academic recovery efforts, and expand tutoring. León also discussed plans to improve school buildings and the possibility of a construction bond referendum. The district is managing a \$1.5 billion budget and is focused on improving attendance rates, supporting vulnerable students, and addressing diversity issues. Additionally, the district is utilizing AI technology to support teachers and ensure student safety. One highlight of the plan is the launch of Khanmigo, an AI chatbot designed to assist teachers and students. The program will be piloted in 14 schools and expand to grades 3-8. Through Khanmigo, students can take assessments and receive targeted instruction, while teachers can make intentional academic decisions. The district is also using Khanmigo to analyze state testing data and measure its impact on student growth and achievement. Overall, the plan aims to transform the school district and provide a quality education for all students.

[Chalkbeat](#)

----- WORKFORCE -----

Florida schools face massive teacher shortage

The education sector in Florida is facing a significant crisis, with 5,007 instructional vacancies reported, and no improvement in support staff roles. David Finkle, a high school English teacher at DeLand High School, highlighted the issue, stating: "Teachers at my high school have close to and upwards of 200 students... we have less than four English teachers for seniors." The Florida Education Association (FEA) is urging lawmakers to increase funding by \$2.5bn annually for the next seven years to enhance teacher salaries, hire more mental health specialists, and address students' academic needs.

[The Baltimore Sun](#)

DeSantis faces uphill battle for school boards

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has described his efforts to shift the state's school boards to the right as an "uphill battle." During a news conference, he acknowledged the hard work of candidates and emphasized the importance of participation, stating: "You gotta swing and you gotta be in the game." Despite some victories, including two DeSantis-backed candidates winning seats in **Duval County**, the overall results were mixed. The Florida Democratic Party celebrated their wins, with Chair Nikki Fried declaring: "Ron DeSantis' culture wars are over." She noted that voters are "tired of the divisiveness" and have taken back the school boards. DeSantis'

political action committee is also focused on opposing amendments related to recreational marijuana and abortion rights in the upcoming November elections.

[Florida Phoenix](#)

----- CLASSROOM -----

Fifteen million U.S. children classed as chronically absent

The 2024 Kids Count Data Book by the Annie E. Casey Foundation reveals that nearly 15m children were chronically absent in the 2021-22 school year, which is double the pre-pandemic numbers. This increase in chronic absenteeism disproportionately affects Native, Black, and Latino children and has led to bleak educational outcomes. The report highlights the urgent need for targeted investments in family engagement, social emotional health, and tutoring to prevent a generation of Black and brown kids from being shut out of high-paying STEM fields. The report also reveals that 40% of kids have experienced adverse childhood experiences, such as parent death or abuse. The highest chronic absenteeism rates were observed in Alaska, Arizona, Washington D.C., and Oregon, while the lowest rates were seen in Idaho, Louisiana, New Jersey, and Washington. The data book emphasizes the importance of addressing economic and housing instability, limited childcare options, and transportation challenges that hinder children from attending school consistently. The report also highlights the reading and literacy crisis, with only one in three kids reading at grade level by 4th grade. The report calls for increased investments in early childhood education and high dosage tutoring to improve children's well-being.

[Star-Telegram](#)

----- FINANCE -----

Department of Education currently reviewing requests to extend ESSER deadlines

The U.S. Department of Education has, to date, approved all requests from states to extend spending deadlines for COVID-19 federal emergency funds. It is in the process of reviewing Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) spending extension requests for American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act funds — the last and largest federal COVID-related appropriation. Spending extension requests were submitted for every allocation under the Education Stabilization Fund available for K-12. Those allocations include ESSER, Governor's Emergency Education Relief and Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools. Subsequent allocations to the fund were delivered through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) Act, and the ARP Act. States and districts with spending extensions have an extra 14 months beyond the spending deadline to liquidate their allocations. While there are no formal deadlines for making late liquidation requests, the Education Department has advised states and districts to be mindful of when extension periods end for each funding stream in order to best plan for the use of the funds.

[K-12 Dive](#)

----- LEGAL -----

SCOTUS blocks partial enforcement of final Title IX rule

The Supreme Court has rejected the Biden administration's efforts for it to partially lift two injunctions barring the Education Department from enforcing most of its Title IX rule. In a 5-4 decision released Friday, the high court said it had not been given sufficient basis to disturb the lower courts' findings that the challenged gender identity and sex discrimination protections were "intertwined with and affect other provisions of the rule." The Education Department had asked the court to lift the preliminary injunctions on

enforcing the rules, arguing that the decisions by federal courts in Louisiana and Kentucky to block the entirety of Title IX regulations in a number of states were overly broad. States requested the injunctions based on objections to provisions within the regulations that deal with discrimination based on gender identity. The ruling is being seen as a major blow to the administration's efforts to strengthen protections for transgender students and leaves in place the complicated patchwork of Title IX policies across the country as the school year begins.

[The Hill](#) [K-12 Dive](#) [Politico](#) [Washington Post](#)

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

LGBTQ+ students face mental health crisis

LGBTQ+ students attending schools with restrictive policies face significant mental health challenges, according to The Trevor Project's latest report. The survey of 18,663 LGBTQ+ youth revealed that those in schools with at least one anti-LGBTQ+ policy reported higher rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. Jonah DeChants, a senior research scientist at The Trevor Project, stated, "The presence of these policies is clearly impacting the culture of the school." Despite these challenges, over 75% of LGBTQ+ students in such environments reported having a supportive adult at school. Gia Loving, co-executive director for GSA Network, emphasized the importance of creating a welcoming environment, stating that Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) can improve school climate and encourage attendance. The report highlights the urgent need for supportive measures to protect the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth in educational settings.

[Education Week News](#)

----- SOCIAL & COMMUNITY -----

Gen Z's trust in government plummets

According to a recent study by Gallup and the Walton Family Foundation, half of voting-age Generation Z members express "very little" trust in the federal government. The survey revealed that 51% of respondents lack confidence in the presidency, while 53% feel similarly about Congress. Trust in the Supreme Court is also low, with 44% expressing skepticism. Interestingly, 59% of Gen Z students trust their teachers, contrasting sharply with their views on government and news sources. The survey, conducted from April 26 to May 9, included 4,157 respondents aged 12 to 27, highlighting a significant generational divide in trust levels.

[The Sacramento Bee](#)



The ungraded papers in my bag
watching me turn on the TV...

