

The Education Coalition

Working together to support and improve California's public schools

Association of California School Administrators (ACSA)

representing more than 18,000 school administrators

California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO)

representing more than 30,000 school business officials

California County Superintendents

representing all 58 county superintendents throughout California

CFT, A Union of Educators and Classified Professionals, represents 120,000 educational employees working at every level of public and private education from Head Start to the University of California.

California School Boards Association (CSBA)

representing nearly 1,000 K-12 school districts and county offices of education throughout California

California School Employees Association (CSEA)

representing more than 250,000 classified school employees

California State PTA

representing more than 550,000 parents, teachers, and students in California

California Teachers Association (CTA)

representing over 325,000 educators

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

representing more than 50,000 school employees in California

Consultant:
David Neben
dneben@strategicadvocates.com

February 26, 2026

Memorandum

TO: Education Policymakers

FROM: The Education Coalition

RE: **Response to TK-12 Education Proposals in the Governor's January Budget**

The Education Coalition appreciates the Governor and Legislature in your ongoing commitment to supporting public education. We support the Administration's attention to prioritizing prior commitments and existing programs that support California's TK-12 students.

Each year, the Education Coalition engages with legislative members of the budget and policy committees to share our consensus position on the major education budget proposals.

In addition to our January 28, 2026 letter condemning the Proposition 98 withholding, we now share the Coalition's positions in regard to various elements within the Governor's 2026-27 January Budget Proposal.

Fully Fund the Proposition 98 Guarantee

As discussed in our recent letter from January 28, 2026, the Education Coalition's nine statewide organizations **strongly oppose** the withholding of \$5.6 billion from the 2025-26 Proposition 98 Guarantee. These unappropriated funds would otherwise be used to retain and hire staff, sustain essential programs such as special education and mental health services, and cover the cost of core instruction. This proposal circumvents existing law, which already sets a process to restore full funding, with inflation adjustments, in a timely manner. For the third year in a row, these funding manipulations have forced schools to absorb major shortfalls, undermining Proposition 98's voter-approved role as a stable funding floor for California's students. As a united coalition, we urge the Legislature to reject this proposal.

Local Control Funding Formula Cost-of-Living Adjustment

The Coalition supports the proposed cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of 2.41 percent. COLAs are essential for our local educational agencies (LEAs) to keep pace with inflation and rising operational costs, support staff retention and recruitment, and help to maintain stability for existing programs in our schools. The Coalition also acknowledges the repayment of the \$1.9 billion deferral from 2025-26 for TK-12 education.

Student Support and Professional Development Discretionary Block Grant

The Coalition supports the Governor's proposal to provide \$2.8 billion one-time funding for the Student Support and Professional Development Discretionary Block Grant. This investment is essential for LEAs to address increased costs and maintain services for students. We continue to advocate for these funds to be allocated on a per-student basis.

Special Education

Public schools are experiencing growth in the population of students identified with disabilities, as well as an expansion in the scope and intensity of the supports to which those students are entitled. The federal government has never kept its promise to fund its share of special education cost. Yet, our LEAs continue to ensure that our students receive the appropriate support and services that they need. Therefore, we appreciate and support the Governor's proposal to provide a \$509 million increase to special education base rates.

Investments in Teacher Preparation

The Education Coalition supports the Governor's proposed investment of \$250 million in one-time Proposition 98 General Funds to continue educator residency programs through 2029-30. We recognize that skilled and trained educators are essential to advancing educational equity and ensuring all students thrive.

Investment in Necessary Small Schools

The Coalition supports the \$30.7 million increase for funding Necessary Small Schools. We believe that all students deserve well-funded and well-staffed schools.

Maintain Prior Commitments

The Education Coalition supports the Governor and Legislature in your commitment to serving the whole child through transformative investments such as community schools, home-to-school transportation, and universal school meals. We appreciate that the Governor proposes to fully fund these prior commitments, and we ask the Legislature to prioritize fully funding existing commitments before creating new programs or requirements. We note that the funding for the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program represents a significant commitment of ongoing Proposition 98 funding.

As always, the Education Coalition stands ready to work with the Legislature and Administration to help ensure the best outcome for California's TK-12 students. We look forward to continued discussions as the 2026-27 budget process moves forward. Please contact David Neben, Consultant to the Education Coalition, at dneben@strategicadvocates.com if you have any questions regarding this letter or regarding the Education Coalition in general.

Sincerely,
The Education Coalition