

ACSA's Advocacy in Action

During the second year of the 2023-24 legislative session, over 2,000 legislative proposals were reviewed by ACSA staff, with ACSA's Legislative Policy Committee approving active positions on more than 60 key bills. ACSA heavily influenced state budget and policy outcomes on behalf of students and school leaders. These legislative victories advance ACSA's One Voice for Students Legislative Platform. The Advocacy in Action document details just a sampling of ACSA's advocacy success.

Protected Prop. 98 and Fully Funded Public Education

California faced an unprecedented \$48 billion budget deficit. To manage the shortfall, the Governor proposed manipulating the Prop. 98 Guarantee, which would have resulted in billions of dollars of cuts in school funding.

OUR ADVOCACY | ACSA protected the integrity of Prop. 98 and ensured schools received the funding they are entitled to under the state's constitution. Not only were schools shielded from cuts, but public education also received a much-needed COLA.

\$10 Billion School Facilities Bond Secured on the November Ballot

The current backlog of unfunded school projects exceeds \$3 billion and is growing. A new state bond is needed to support vital projects to repair, upgrade, modernize, and construct school facilities.

OUR ADVOCACY | ACSA was a lead proponent for securing the state school facility bond, Proposition 2, on the November ballot.

Ensured The Most Qualified Staff Can Be Hired

[AB 2088 \(McCarty\)](#) would have created a "right of first refusal" for existing classified staff, based on seniority, blocking pathways for more qualified, suitable staff to advance. It also created a 10-day waiting period before external candidates could be offered a position.

OUR ADVOCACY | ACSA led a 100+ member coalition to stop the bill from becoming law. The Governor's veto message echoed our arguments in stating that the bill would have, "unintended consequences that are not in the best interest of students."

Protecting LGBTQ+ Students

Some school districts adopted "forced outing" parental notification policies for students who identify as LGBTQ+ or are gender nonconforming, thereby threatening student privacy rights. These policies, along with contradictory court orders and state guidance, created confusion and put educators in difficult positions as they attempted to protect and serve their students.

OUR ADVOCACY | ACSA supported [AB 1955 \(Ward\)](#), also known as the SAFETY Act, that upholds student privacy rights, provides legal clarity, and protects employees against retaliation for following state and federal laws.

Youth Mental Health & Well-Being

The harmful impacts of social media on youth mental health and well-being have been well documented. School leaders have also described the effects of disturbing social media posts that are reported to social media companies but not removed.

OUR ADVOCACY | ACSA led advocacy efforts on [SB 976 \(Skinner\)](#) and [SB 1504 \(Stern\)](#) that will shield youth from addictive social media feeds, and create greater accountability for social media platforms to block and take down harmful content.



Protected Essential Student Services

Several bills attempted to create a de facto ban on schools' ability to contract for services, including essential needs that cannot be met due to workforce shortages or the inability to find individuals with the specialized skills necessary to perform roles.

OUR ADVOCACY | ACSA sounded the alarm for school entities to defeat [AB 2557 \(Ortega\)](#) and [AB 2489 \(Ward\)](#), thereby ensuring student services will not be diminished and contracted services may continue.

Access to Life-Saving Medication

There has been a dramatic rise in fentanyl-related deaths among teens. Naloxone is used to reverse opioid overdoses and greater access to the medication has been identified as a way to save lives.

OUR ADVOCACY | ACSA successfully advocated for [AB 2998 \(McKinnor\)](#) to allow students to carry naloxone at school. Included in the bill is clear indemnification language for students, staff, and schools.

Stopped State from Penalizing Schools During Emergency Closures

The Governor proposed to fiscally penalize schools that close due to emergencies if remote instruction was not provided within five days.

OUR ADVOCACY | ACSA mobilized school districts statewide to successfully demonstrate to legislative leadership that the proposal would penalize schools for factors out of their control.

Expanding Dual Enrollment Opportunities

Current law limits a College and Career Access Pathway (CCAP) partnership between a school district and the community college in their service area, which stifles innovations and programs for students.

OUR ADVOCACY | ACSA prioritized the passage of [SB 1244 \(Newman\)](#) to allow districts to partner with additional community colleges through the CCAP program, enriching the academic experience for students and contributing to a more skilled and empowered workforce.

Streamlined Accountability

Schools have been inundated with a myriad of reports. These reporting obligations are time-consuming and divert valuable energy and funds away from serving students.

OUR ADVOCACY | ACSA advocated for the passage of [SB 1315 \(Archuleta\)](#), which requires the state to conduct a report on the number and types of reports required of LEAs. ACSA is committed to ensuring the report's findings become the catalyst for streamlining reporting requirements.

Expanded Educational Opportunities for Incarcerated Youth

State law has prevented incarcerated students from accessing high school courses beyond the state's 130 credit minimum.

OUR ADVOCACY | ACSA successfully advocated for [AB 2181 \(Gipson\)](#) to expand opportunities for incarcerated students to stay in high school, as appropriate, to continue their education and complete local graduation requirements.

Developmentally Appropriate Assessments

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) students have been administered the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC), an assessment that was never piloted on four-year-olds and may have long-term consequences on students who are misassessed or misidentified.

OUR ADVOCACY | ACSA partnered with early learning advocates to enact [AB 2268 \(Muratsuchi\)](#), which exempts TK students from the ELPAC and requires the state to consider developmentally appropriate solutions to support multilingual children.

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