

Legislation VP – Derby Pattengill

Covid Relief update

The nearly \$2 trillion American Rescue Plan that President Joe Biden signed in March will send \$15.3 billion in assistance to California's K-12 schools. It will be by far the biggest of three relief acts that Congress passed in less than a year to combat the pandemic and the recession.

Altogether, federal funding to the state's schools from the CARES Act last spring, a second round in late December and the new American Rescue Plan totals \$26.4 billion — more than quadruple the \$6 billion the state received from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act passed during the Great Recession.

That's about \$4,300 per student — a record infusion of money. But the amount among districts will vary widely, since the funding is heavily weighted toward children in poverty, which Congress recognized as the most impacted by the pandemic and needing the most help.

HOW MUCH IS GOING TO CALIFORNIA SCHOOL DISTRICTS?

This [database](#) breaks down how much each district in California will receive in total and per student under the American Rescue Plan Act as estimated by EdSource and totals for earlier Covid relief bills.

Of California's portion for K-12 schools, 90% — \$13.7 billion — will go straight to districts within weeks based on their share of Title I funding. Districts must use the money on Covid-related learning and school reopening expenses, but will have wide discretion. They must use 20% of the funding to make up for lost learning — providing summer school, tutoring, counseling or mental health services. A new "maintenance of equity" provision prohibits districts from cutting spending in high-poverty schools disproportionately compared with reductions in all of their schools over the next two years.

All of the federal money is **one-time funding**, with no assurance that Congress will renew it. That will make it tricky to add permanent teachers to reduce class sizes, which many districts would like to do, or hire a lot more nurses, counselors and social workers. But, recognizing that Covid-19's harm will be long lasting, as will the recession in many states, Congress is giving states until Sept. 20, 2024, to spend all of the money.

Districts must create a plan for using the latest money and publicly share it by June 1.

Did you catch that? Your LEA must seek public comment on their plans. Now sometimes these things can be difficult to find, but know that this is written into the law and is your chance to advocate for our children at the local level.

So here is your chance to get engaged if you have not already done so.

- Check your school districts website to see what their ESSER plan is. While you are at it, see what is going on with the Local Control Accountability Plan or LCAP. Learning Continuity and attendance plan
- Attend a school board meeting
- Sign up for advocacy alerts from National and California PTA
- Participate in our take action campaigns
- Encourage people to join and support PTA. The strength in our voice comes from our membership. With a strong and engaged membership voice we can truly positively impact the lives of all children and families and make every child's potential a reality.

The state will get 10% of the \$15.3 billion. It must use half, about \$760 million, to mitigate learning loss of homeless and other heavily impacted student groups and \$300 million split between summer enrichment and social-emotional assistance for the same groups of students. It will have \$380 million to use at its discretion.

Separate from federal aid, last month, Gov. Gavin Newsom and the Legislature appropriated \$6.6 billion to help districts recover from the pandemic's impact. It includes \$2 billion in incentive funding for districts and charter schools to start sending their youngest students back for in-person instruction by April 1.

That will bring total state and federal aid since the start of the pandemic a year ago to about \$33 billion. By comparison, Newsom is proposing a K-12 budget of \$89 billion for 2021-22.

Current Legislation

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March Legislation Action Report is [here](#)