



Legislative Update from Austin Weber - Principal | W Strategies LLC

The State Legislature returned from a scheduled Summer Recess this week to resume committee hearings and wrap up unfinished business for the year. For those unfamiliar with the legislative calendar, the Legislature operates on a two-year schedule that coincides with the election of Assemblymembers and Senators. Each year typically consists of a month-long break during the summer and a longer break in the fall between the first and second year of session. Now that members have returned, they will have until September 10th to act on bills introduced earlier this year.

Prior to their departure for the summer, the Legislature passed a series of budget bills that have massive impacts for the State of California and the community college system. The 2020-21 Budget Act increases the overall funding for the California Community Colleges by more than \$3.5 billion in one-time and ongoing dollars. These increases include spending for student basic needs and financial aid, faculty support and staff professional development, and the paydown of deferrals proposed in last year's budget due to the pandemic. Notably, for the first time since the program's inception and as a result of CCCAOE's advocacy, the Strong Workforce Program received an ongoing budget increase of more than \$42 million.

In the coming weeks, the Legislature will likely pass a series of "Budget Jr" bills that will make minor technical changes to the previously enacted budget and consider a variety of revenue changes as the state updates its regular tax collection activities and adjusts projections for the coming year. While much of this is routine on the Legislature's part, the pending recall election of Governor Newsom is likely to add an additional layer of politics to the end of session. Ballots for the election have already started being delivered to registered voters and the election is set for September 14th.

Meanwhile, in Washington, DC, the Senate passed a bipartisan spending deal that would make some of the largest investments in public infrastructure in our nation's history. The package, which totals nearly \$1.2 trillion, is pending in the House of Representatives where it is currently caught up in the larger politics of the federal budget process. If passed, the infrastructure deal would directly benefit our institutions and students with nearly \$42.45 billion in broadband expansion funding for states and indirectly through the creation of demand for CTE programs related to construction and transportation operations. Although a prior version of the bill had direct funding for education related to these programs, those funds were removed and will instead become part of the budget reconciliation process that is likely to drag into the fall.

CCCAOE will continue to monitor and engage in these processes at both the state and federal level. If you are interested in participating on our Advocacy Committee or want to learn more about how you can participate in our advocacy efforts, contact your Regional Vice President.