



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

March 8, 2021

The mission of the YPI Charter Schools (YPICS) is to prepare students for academic success in high school, as well as post--secondary education; prepare students to be responsible and active participants in their community; and enable students to become life-long learners. Students at YPI Charter Schools will become active citizens who characterize the ideals of a diverse and democratic society. Students will provide service to their community, take responsibility for their own learning, and develop the habits of mind and body that will empower them to be successful in high school and beyond.

State:

From School Services of California –

“ESSER II Funding Allocations Released – Updated”
posted February 11, 2021

The California Department of Education published preliminary allocations for the second round of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER II) funds, which were authorized by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act. As a reminder, more than \$6 billion of ESSER II funds will be distributed to local educational agencies in proportion to their 2020–21 share of Title I, Part A funds. The preliminary allocations are also accompanied by updated allowable uses.

ESSER II Allowable Uses –

The ESSER II Funds can be used in much the same way as the ESSER Funds under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The difference is that with ESSER II there are more defined allowable uses:

1. Any activity authorized by the ESEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins), or the McKinney Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.
2. Coordination of LEA preparedness and response efforts to improve coordinated responses with other agencies to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.
3. Providing principals and other school leaders with the resources necessary to address school needs.

4. Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth.
5. Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve LEA preparedness and response efforts.
6. Training and professional development for LEA staff on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.
7. Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean LEA facilities.
8. Planning for and coordinating during long-term closures, including how to provide meals, technology for online learning, guidance on IDEA requirements, and ensuring other educational services can continue to be provided consistent with all applicable requirements.
9. Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students served by the LEA that aids in regular and substantive educational interactions between students and their classroom teachers, including assistance technology or adaptive equipment.
10. Providing mental health services and supports.
11. Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.
12. Addressing learning loss among students, including low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care, of the local educational agency, including by–
 - o Administering and using high-quality assessments to accurately assess students’ academic progress and assist educators in meeting students’ academic needs, including through differentiating instruction.
 - o Implementing evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students.
 - o Providing information and assistance to parents and families on how they can effectively support students, including in a distance learning environment.
 - o Tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education.
13. School facility repairs and improvements to reduce risk of virus transmission and to support student health needs.
14. Inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities, including mechanical and non-mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, filtering, purification, and other air cleaning, fans, control systems, and window and door repair and replacement.
15. Other activities that are necessary to maintain operations and continuity of services and continuing to employ existing staff.

ESSER II funds should be assigned to SACS resource code 3212, object code 8290. Still to be determined are the appropriate fiscal year for revenue recognition and the cash flow distribution schedule.

“SBE to Seek a Federal Accountability Waiver and Assessment Flexibilities”
posted February 26, 2021

The State Board of Education (SBE) held a meeting on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, to consider the state’s options to pursue a federal assessment and accountability waiver for the 2020–21 school year.

The meeting came just two days after the U.S. Department of Education (ED) sent a letter to all chief state school officers that frames the assessment and accountability waivers and flexibilities that the ED will consider for the current school year.

The ED is inviting states to apply for an accountability waiver, which would allow states to forgo the implementation and reporting of assessment results in their accountability system as part of federal requirements. States also would not be required to identify schools for federal comprehensive support and improvement, targeted support and improvement, and additional targeted support and improvement.

However, the letter stipulates that the ED is not inviting blanket assessment waivers for the 2020–21 school year. Instead, they recommend states use their flexibility to administer shortened assessments, offer remote administration, and extend testing windows. The rationale for not offering blanket waivers is that the ED wants to provide information to parents, educators, and the public about student performance and also to help target resources and supports. Despite this, the letter also states, “certainly, we do not believe that if there are places where students are unable to attend school safely in person because of the pandemic that they should be brought into school buildings for the sole purpose of taking a test.”

The SBE adopted a condensed version of the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics Smarter Balanced assessments in November 2020 in response to the Trump Administration’s letter telling states not to expect testing waivers for 2020–21. The short forms of the summative assessments were adopted to maximize flexibility for local educational agencies (LEAs) to administer the tests given the variety of instructional models applied across the state, with LEAs offering either distance learning, in-person instruction, or a hybrid model.

In response to the federal guidance letter, the SBE passed several motions to direct California Department of Education staff to send a waiver request to the ED that, if approved, will remove the high stakes federal accountability requirements. California’s waiver request to the ED will include the following:

- Decouple federal accountability requirements from this year’s assessments, including suspending the requirement to identify schools for support and improvement using 2020–21 data
- Waive federal penalties if the student participation rate for the ELA and mathematics Smarter Balanced assessments are below 95%
- Extend the 2020–21 test administration window for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) exams and the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) to July 30, 2021
- Waive the California Science Test for the 2020–21 school year

Additionally, at its March 17–18 meeting, the SBE will consider a plan for 2020–21 school year assessments that provides data to parents, educators, and the public by monitoring the progress of students in ELA and math. The SBE seeks to be able to uniformly report this assessment data in both aggregated and disaggregated forms. In the meantime, as the SBE continues to deliberate the assessments plan, the testing window for the Smarter Balanced assessments opened on February 22, 2021, and some LEAs have already begun administering the summative math assessment.

It is important to note that if the ED does approve the waiver, those flexibilities would only extend to the federal accountability and assessment requirements. State legislation or an executive order from Governor Gavin Newsom would be needed in order to waive the state accountability and assessment requirements that are in California statute. Under current state law, the requirement to administer the CAASPP and ELPAC this school year still remains.

“Unduplicated Pupil Counts Decline in 2020–21”

posted February 26, 2021

There has been no shortage of challenges thrown at local educational agencies (LEAs) in the 2019–20 and 2020–21 fiscal years, but some of those hurdles have been ameliorated through the foresight of the Governor and Legislature, such as the shortened Second Principal Apportionment (P-2) and Annual Apportionment (P-Annual) periods in 2019–20, and the hold harmless provision for average daily attendance applied to 2020–21. One unanswered question is what would happen to the unduplicated pupil counts in 2020–21 as LEAs did not have the safety net of a hold harmless for their unduplicated pupil percentages (UPP).

The California Department of Education (CDE) recently certified the 2020–21 First Principal Apportionment (P-1). Included in the certification are the details for calculating the UPP—the unduplicated pupil counts (UPC) for the 2020–21 fiscal year and the two preceding years. It comes as no surprise that the UPP declined statewide from 62.60% (the estimated UPP as of 2019–20 P-2) to 61.77%—a slight reduction of 0.83% in the statewide UPP for school districts and charter schools.

But the three-year rolling average UPP calculation masks a larger concern—the marked decline in pupil enrollment in the current year. Even more alarming, is the rate of decline of the number of unduplicated pupils.

The details of the UPP calculations reveal that pupil enrollment in public K–12 education declined by approximately 150,000 in 2020–21, but the number of pupils identified as unduplicated decreased by more than 170,000 in 2020–21. The decrease in unduplicated pupils lowered the statewide UPC percentage from 62.44% to 61.12%. Not all LEAs experienced a single-year decrease in UPC percentage, but the data shows that 53% of LEAs experienced a single-year decline.

Looking only at LEAs with more than 1,000 students enrolled in 2020–21, a population of 655,

changes in 2020–21 UPC percentage ranged from an increase of 39.88% to a decrease of 25.31% from the prior year’s UPC percentage. Drilling down even further, and looking at the data from the ten largest school districts in the state as measured by 2020–21 enrollment, all ten experienced a decrease in the number of unduplicated pupils, and eight experienced a decrease in their UPC percentage. The changes in UPC percentage ranged from an increase of 0.64% to a decrease of 15.17%.

LEAs that experienced a decline in their current year UPC percentage are somewhat insulated from the impact as the UPP, which as the basis for supplemental and concentration grant funding, is calculated using a rolling three-year average. The three-year average is intended to shield LEAs from the impact of a single year’s change in unduplicated pupils. However, even a rapid change in a single year can impact an LEA’s Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) entitlement, especially those LEAs that receive concentration grant funds.

Next Steps

It is worth noting that the data reported with the P-1 certification captures UPP records certified by LEAs through December 18th. Any changes to those records that were captured in the amendment window which closed February 4th will be reported with the P-2 certification in June. It is our hope that LEAs, especially those that experienced a decline in the current year’s UPC percentage, took advantage of the amendment window, inclusive of the additional flexibility provided for documenting the socioeconomic status of students.

Although the LCFF allocations will be updated to use the certified P-2 records, inclusive of changes recorded in the amendment window, LEAs must still ensure that their records are in order to pass the annual audit. For each student that is recorded as an unduplicated pupil, LEAs should ensure that the student’s status is properly documented to support their designation as either low socioeconomic status, English language learner, or a foster youth in order to avoid audit penalties.

“Newsom’s Budget Promotes Universal TK”
posted March 1, 2021

When Governor Gavin Newsom unveiled his 2021–22 State Budget proposal on January 8, 2021, he proposed financial incentives for local educational agencies (LEAs) to expand access to prekindergarten programs for four-year-old children in their communities through transitional kindergarten (TK). His investments follow on the recommendations included in the recently released Master Plan for Early Learning and Care, which he championed, to achieve universal preschool through TK for all four-year-olds in California—an early campaign promise.

While the Governor’s proposal falls shy of this important, if not lofty goal, he wants California to take some critical steps toward achieving it through three investments that aid in the operation of expanding TK, ensuring that there are sufficient facilities to house students, and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers to teach them.

TK Budget Package

Specifically, the Governor’s budget package includes:

- \$250 million in one-time Proposition 98 funds to provide incentive grants equal to 50% of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) K–3 grade span base grant and an LEA’s entitlement to supplemental and concentration grants to pay for the cost of expanding TK to four-year-olds whose 5th birthdays occur after December 2. The incentive grants would be provided over a three-year period beginning in 2022–23.
- \$200 million in one-time non-Proposition 98 funds to provide grants to build new or renovate existing classrooms with priority for expanded TK programs and full-day kindergarten programs.
- \$50 million in one-time Proposition 98 funds to increase the number of teachers eligible to teach TK and provide training for TK and kindergarten teachers to support inclusive classrooms, dual language learners, and key pedagogical practices relating to social-emotional learning, trauma, restorative justice, and implicit bias.

In addition to these financial incentives, Governor Newsom proposes to grant authority to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to evaluate how LEAs are complying with the requirements that teachers first assigned to a TK classroom after July 1, 2015, either have 24 units in early childhood education or child development, professional experience serving preschool-age children equivalent to 24 units, or a child development teacher permit. And as a result of COVID-19’s impact on the teaching profession and in recognition of the state’s stubborn teacher shortage crisis, the Governor proposes extending the deadline for all teachers subject to the requirement to comply by two additional years, to August 1, 2023.

Building on Earlier TK Policies

Newsom’s TK budget package signifies his commitment to his early campaign promises to improve California’s early learning system and builds on prior state policy changes that paved the path for universal TK. Two previous budget actions have had a significant impact on expanding TK.

- **Funding for Expanded TK.** In 2015, the state authorized LEAs to enroll at any time during the school year any four-year-old whose 5th birthday occurs after December 2 in TK and generate average daily attendance for apportionment purposes for them after they turn five years old.
- While this authority opened the door for many LEAs to expand TK, the prorated funding provisions, or absence of funding in some examples, inhibited their ability to do so on a widescale basis because the cost of expanding TK was more than the funding they would receive. Thus, the Governor’s limited-time incentive grants would cover much of the currently unreimbursed costs LEAs bear when they enroll young TK students.
- **Commingling TK and State Preschool.** One of the ways LEAs have been able to take advantage of the authority to expand TK through early enrollment is through additional authority to commingle TK and State Preschool classes that serve both types of students. State policy now authorizes LEAs to:
 - o Be exempt from childcare facilities licensing requirements for classes serving four-year-olds as long as the facilities meet kindergarten and Field Act requirements
 - o Enroll State Preschool children in a TK program as long as they are not receiving funding from

both programs simultaneously

These two policy shifts removed significant barriers to expanding TK, such as different facilities standards that would otherwise bar them from housing younger four-year-olds and enrolling State Preschool-eligible students in TK so as to leverage a funding stream to pay for the part of the year that those students do not generate LCFF funding.

Again, the Governor's 2021–22 TK budget package advances efforts toward universal TK, but falls shy of achieving it in full. However, Assembly Member Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento)—a long-standing early learning advocate—introduced Assembly Bill 22 (AB22) that over a period of time would expand TK access to every four-year-old in the state.

The Governor's proposed investments, as well as AB 22, pique the interest of LEAs experiencing year-over-year declines in student enrollment, creating a funding crisis for them as their yearly LCFF apportionments get reduced. Even more, the COVID-19 pandemic appears to have had a disproportionate effect on TK and kindergarten enrollment as parents struggle to help young children navigate online instruction or don't want to expose them to hours of screen time. The effects of natural declining enrollment, exacerbated by the pandemic-induced drops in student enrollment, will continue to impact LEA funding for the coming years. For these LEAs, securing additional students through expanded TK may be just what they need.

“Governor and Legislature Reach \$6.6 Billion Deal to Reopen Schools and Expand Learning”
posted March 1, 2021

On March 1, 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom announced a deal with the Legislature had been reached to provide \$2.0 billion for In-Person Instruction Grants and \$4.6 billion for Expanded Learning Opportunities Grants, bringing an end to months of negotiations between the Governor, the Legislature, and key education stakeholders who have prioritized safely reopening schools for millions of students across California. Assembly Bill (AB) 86 was amended on March 1 to reflect the deal lawmakers came to over the weekend.

In-Person Instruction Grants

In order to receive the In-Person Instruction Grants, local educational agencies (LEAs) must offer in-person instruction to students by April 1. An LEA that is unable to meet these requirements for in-person instruction by April 1 remains eligible for incrementally decreased grant amounts as long as the required in-person instruction is offered by May 15. The grant is reduced by 1% for each day of instruction between April 1 and May 15 that the LEA does not provide in-person instruction in accordance with grant requirements. An LEA forfeits the In-Person Instruction Grant if it does not offer in-person instruction by May 15 or if does not provide continuous in-person instruction through the remainder of the school year.

The table below identifies the requirements to offer in-person instruction as a condition of receiving the grant, based on the color tiers in the Blueprint for a Safer Economy.

	Purple	Red	Orange	Yellow
Students	<p>Transitional Kindergarten (TK) – Grade 12 specialized cohorts*</p> <p>TK – Grade 2 for adjusted daily case rate < 25 per 100,000</p>	<p>TK – Grade 12 specialized cohorts*</p> <p>TK – Grade 5 or 6 (depending on local elementary school model)</p> <p>At least one middle or high school grade level</p>		
Asymptomatic COVID-19 Testing	<p>Must conduct in accordance with the testing cadence in Table 3 of the K–12 School Guidance (p. 43)</p>	<p>Must describe testing cadence in LEA COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP)</p>		

*Specialized cohorts mean cohorts serving foster youth, homeless students, students at risk of neglect or abuse, English learners, disengaged students, students with disabilities, and students without access to technology to participate in distance learning

In a big shift compared to the prior proposals for the In-Person Instruction Grants, the compromise includes no reference to a requirement for a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) as a condition of receiving the funds. However, LEAs should note that even in the absence of any explicit requirement for a CBA in order to be eligible for the grant, existing requirements to collaborate and negotiate with labor partners under the Educational Employment Relations Act (EERA) remain.

AB 86 contains two distinct grandfathering provisions. LEAs that are providing in-person instruction by April 1, or have a board adopted plan for in-person instruction by that date and have posted their COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP), are not required to adopt the required testing cadence in the purple tier. A second provision specifies that neither the funding conditions nor the issuance of any nonmandatory guidance issued by the Department of Public Health requires LEAs that have publicly posted CSPs on or before March 31 to revise their plans.

The \$2.0 billion for the In-Person Instruction Grants will be distributed to LEAs in proportion to their Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) entitlement. Funds will be distributed in May using 2020–21 First Principal (P-1) Apportionment and preliminary Fall 1 California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) data, and remaining funds will be distributed in August using 2020–21 Second Principal (P-2) Apportionment and final Fall 1 CALPADS data. In-Person Instruction Grants may be used until August 31, 2022. Grant recipients must report to the California Department of Education by June 1 on when they reopened for in-person instruction, and this certification will impact funds received in August. A look-up table is

available below to view an estimate for the maximum amount of In-Person Instruction Grant your LEA may receive if you comply with the grant requirements by April 1.

Expanded Learning Opportunity Grants

Much of the compromise for the Expanded Learning Opportunity Grant program aligns with previous proposals to provide \$4.6 billion for learning recovery. LEAs will receive \$1,000 for each homeless student enrolled, and after provided funds for the state special funds, the remaining \$4.6 billion will be distributed in proportion to an LEA's LCFF entitlement. Like the formula for In-Person Instruction Grants, funding for the May and August allocations will be based on 2020–21 P-1 and P-2 Apportionments and Fall 1 preliminary and final CALPADS data.

The grants may be used for various strategies to accelerate learning and address student needs, such as extended learning time, professional development, programs to address social-emotional learning, and access to school meals. At least 85% of the funds must be used for activities provided in-person, and up to 15% of funds may be used for activities provided remotely. Similar to a requirement in Senate Bill (SB) 86, at least 10% of grant proceeds must be used to employ paraprofessionals, but full-time status is prioritized rather than required. If an LEA foregoes receiving the In-Person Instruction Grant, then up to ten percent of the Expanded Learning Opportunity Grant may be used for costs associated with reopening for in-person instruction.

Funds are available for use until August 31, 2022; however, LEAs will be required to adopt a plan by June 1, 2021, detailing the use of the Expanded Learning Opportunity Grant. A look-up table below is provided to see an estimate of your LEA's share of the Expanded Learning Opportunity Grant.

Additional Details

In addition to the details regarding the two grants, the legislation codifies the state's prioritization of school staff for COVID-19 vaccines. The language also puts in statute the 10% set aside of vaccines for school staff that the Governor announced recently. Notably, the bill also states explicitly that vaccines for school staff are not a condition of reopening for in-person instruction, which is consistent with Governor Newsom's statements throughout negotiations.

The announcement of a compromise between the Governor, the Senate, and the Assembly brings to a close, months of negotiations that started at the end of December 2020, when the Governor first announced a plan to incentivize in-person instruction. The Legislature is expected to vote on the compromise this week. Once signed into law, the grants will provide LEAs with resources to support bringing more of California's students back to the classroom.

District:

In 2011, a group of charter leaders, supported by LAUSD SELPA Director, Sharon Howell, created the Charter Operated Programs (COP). The program includes three options: 1, 2 and 3,

with 3 offering a “charter-like” option for charter schools authorized by LAUSD. Up until the creation of this entity, charter schools faced a yearly ‘encroachment’ determined by the District that varied from year to year, but inevitably increased yearly without any justification. Sydney Quon was the first Director of the COP. Dixon Deutsch is the current Director. The YPICS Executive Director was part of the hiring committee for the first selection, in large part due to CCSA’s active involvement in the process. In fact, without CCSA’s involvement under Jed Wallace’s leadership, the involvement of LA charter leaders Brian Bauer (Granada Hills Charter), Gayle Nadler (Multicultural Learning Center), Irene Sumida (Fenton Public Schools) and the ED would not have been considered by the school district. The YPICS schools have been members of the Charter Operated Programs, Option 3 since the inception of the innovative collaboration and the Executive Director serves on the Executive Council, and has every year since 2011. After over 35 years as an educator, all connected either directly or indirectly with the LAUSD, the Executive Director points to this venture as the most collaborative project she has ever experienced, and all involved are to be commended for their commitment, continued hard work, and willingness to think ‘outside the box’ to find creative solutions to ensure our most vulnerable students are well served.

The Los Angeles Special Education Joint Powers Authority (JPA) began in 2006, which still exists to ensure Los Angeles charter schools have an exit route from the LAUSD SELPA, if and when needed. The creation of the COP put the plans for a full departure from LAUSD on hold, but the JPA and its board continue to exist – just in case! See the summary of the accomplishments, page 11, of the Charter Operated Programs as the entity celebrates its 10th Anniversary!

YPICS:

Vaccinations

YPICS has made tremendous efforts to work with Community Partners, Clinica Romero, Center for Family Health and Education, and LACOE over the past week to get YPICS educators and staff vaccinated. The effort was so successful that almost 90% + were vaccinated. This creates a tremendous safety net for the working environments on each of our campuses. The focus of YPICS is now turned to looking at how to best actualize each school’s Reopening Plan.

TPD

YPICS TPD days on February 25-26, 2021 –The final TPD days were spent on continuing to support teachers in continuing to develop their skills in Distance Learning. Additionally, we provided the teachers and staff and opportunity to hear from Dr. Hoffman, Kaiser Permanente, North Valley Doctor Ambassador, regarding the vaccine. Additionally, we had Christina Sanghera, CEO of Inspired Wellness, to share additional mental health tips on Self-Care.

The Charter Operated Programs is a unique partnership between LAUSD and the charter school community. Over the past 10 years, charter schools achieved significant gains in improving services and outcomes for students with disabilities across Los Angeles.

THEN

NOW

STUDENT ACCESS

7,000+ students with disabilities served by charters (8.6% of enrollment)
1000+ students with moderate to severe and low incidence needs (1.2% of enrollment)

14,000+ students with disabilities served by charters (12.6% of enrollment)
2,500+ students with moderate to severe and low incidence needs (2.3% of enrollment)

COLLABORATION

Significant programmatic and policy barriers
Lack of dedicated charter school supports
No participation in SELPA governance
Few community partnerships

Collaborative partnership with LAUSD
Dedicated charter support staff
Self-governed consortium of schools
Deep community partnerships

INNOVATION

Limited continuum of special education services
Barriers to serving students with the most significant needs in inclusive settings

60+ innovative programs created to expand the continuum of services and improve outcomes
90% of students with disabilities served in the most inclusive settings

FUNDING EQUITY

Inadequate and inequitable funding
No cost-sharing structures
Lack of economies of scale to build programs

New funding model to align dollars to needs
Cost-sharing structures and risk pools
Strategic investment in innovative programs

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

19% of charter students with disabilities met or exceeded ELA standards (vs 11% in non-charters)
14% of charter students with disabilities met or exceeded math standards (vs 8% in non-charters)
82% of charter students with disabilities earned a high school diploma (vs 63% in non-charters)

