

FACTSHEET:

Governor's Education Governance Proposal

Responding to calls to **unify K-12 governance going back more than 100 years** and the need for **clear state accountability**, the Governor's budget proposes to align the authority of the California Department of Education (CDE) under the State Board of Education (SBE). Also, recognizing the need for a more cohesive and aligned public education system from TK through college, the proposal **reimagines the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) role** by adding voting authorities at all levels of public education governance in California. This **two-fold proposal is designed to address California's fractured public education governance system** within TK-12 and across TK to college.

The Problem Identified Repeatedly over 100+ Years

- **1920**—Identified the “**double-headed**” governance system as a primary problem for the education system. ([Legislative Report](#))
- **1963**—“It would be fruitless here to discourse upon the **difficulty** of requiring a policy-making board appointed by the Governor to have its policies carried out by and through an individual who is elected by the people.” ([Attorney General opinion](#))
- **2004**—“It's impossible to know just **who the “state” is.**” ([A report on school governance and oversight in California](#))
- **2007**—[State-level educational roles overlap and conflict], which “**precludes meaningful accountability**. Not only are local educators not effectively supported by the state, these state-level conflicts---or even the semblance thereof---**impede local effectiveness** when the direction given by the state is seen as unclear.” (Governor's Committee on Education Excellence Technical Report)

Calls for Consolidation, Alignment and State Accountability

- [Little Hoover Commission \(1990\)](#); [Constitution Revision Commission \(1996-97\)](#); [Legislative Analyst's Office Proposal for a Master Plan for Education \(1999\)](#); [Public Policy Institute of California \(2001\)](#); [California's Master Plan for Education \(2002\)](#); [California Performance Review \(2004\)](#); [Governor's Committee on Education Excellence \(2007\)](#); [Legislative Analyst's Office \(2008\)](#); and [PACE \(2025\)](#).

Broad Support From Education Leaders and Equity Advocates

Statewide associations representing district and school administrators, county superintendents, governing boards, and business officials; education policy experts from UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC Davis, Stanford, and USC; Children Now, Ed-Trust West, Public Advocates, Californians Together, Families in Schools, EdVoice, and many more state and local leaders and community organizations support these overdue governance improvements.

Major Provisions of the TBL Proposal (May Revision)

- **Professionalizing CDE leadership with an Education Commissioner.** The Governor will appoint an Education Commissioner, intended to be an educator with executive experience and not a politician, who will serve as the day-to-day manager of the CDE, ensuring alignment between the Governor's Office, SBE and CDE, increasing accountability for implementation and clarity for local educational agencies.
- **Reimagining the role of the SPI.** The SPI currently serves as a voting, ex-officio member of the California State University Board of Trustees and the University of California Board of Regents, as well as the Commission on Teacher Credentialing and the State Teachers Retirement Board. This proposal expands the role of the SPI to a voting member of the SBE and adds the SPI as a voting member of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors. This ensures an independently elected voice across the TK-12 and higher education spectrum, filling a gap that currently exists and an opportunity to better align systems for student success.
- **Upholds the Legislature's Plenary Authority Over Education and Establishes a Process for a Second Phase of Education Governance Consolidation and Streamlining.** By October 2027, requires the Education Commissioner to seek input from interest holders to develop recommendations for legislative consideration for further refining the roles and responsibilities of the SPI and a second phase of governance reform.
- **Protecting Staff.** Rank and file CDE staff will not be directly impacted by this proposal, as it changes who leads the agency and not the functions of the CDE nor laws pertaining to civil service.

Why Now

- ✓ **A transition is imminent.** With the election of a new Governor and SPI, transitions of high-level staff will occur and implementing these changes as this happens makes sense.
- ✓ **Alignment and coordination.** In recent years, new education functions have been established that further bifurcate the systems (e.g. Cradle-to-Career Data System, Office of Civil Rights and California Education Interagency Council). Making the administration of CDE part of the Governor's Administration makes it less likely that additional education functions will be established in non-educational agencies.
- ✓ **Federal actions.** With the changes at the federal level, it has never been more important to have a governance system that is clear, nimble and aligned.
- ✓ **It's time.** After a century of calls for change, California can no longer wait to make this change.

How Governance Changes will Improve Education in California

- The **Legislature and Governor** continue to **set direction** via the **budget and legislation**, and the SBE will continue to set education policies accordingly.
- **Consistent public messaging** and **guidance for schools** within a unified administration, which is especially critical during emergencies.
- **More efficient implementation** with unified goals and priorities rather than potentially competing or misaligned priorities between the Governor and SPI that have historically created challenges for school districts.