



VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Stanley C. Mantooth, County Superintendent of Schools

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET PROPOSALS

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The Governor's Budget Proposals for 2015-16 continue the refreshing positive theme that has existed over the past two years for public education. This comes as a result of an improving economy aided by an additional \$7 billion in annual revenues provided by Proposition 30. As a result, Governor Brown has been able to advance his agenda for public education at a pace greater than initially planned. In fact, these proposals, if enacted, will restore nearly 60% of revenues lost through past years' education cuts.

Not only does the Governor stay the course on the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), Proposition 98 continues to receive most of the new money from increased tax revenues. In fact, the minimum guarantee for the current year increases Prop 98 by \$2.3 billion more than originally adopted, and the Governor proposes an additional increase of \$2.5 billion for 2015-16.

In summary, the Governor's proposals include \$4 billion for LCFF gap closure, a 1.58% COLA, \$1.1 billion for discretionary one-time uses (including Common Core implementation), \$1 billion to eliminate the remaining K-14 apportionment deferrals, \$500 million for an adult education block grant, \$273 million for the emergency repair program (one time funds), \$100 million for internet connectivity and infrastructure, and \$250 million in each of the next three years for Career Technical Education (CTE) matching incentive grants. Although funding for most categorical programs was consolidated into the LCFF in 2013-14, those programs still funded outside the LCFF including Special Education, Child Nutrition, Foster Youth and Preschool are also slated to receive the estimated 1.58% COLA.

However, a number of concerns cast shadows over this good news. The passage of Proposition 2 – the Rainy Day Fund – continues to contain provisions for a cap on school district reserves; planned employer required increases to both CalSTRS and CalPERS pension funds will partially offset new LCFF monies if not taken out of that equation; the ongoing need for a statewide school facilities bond; and, just how many years will pass before we experience another recession cycle. We must also be reminded that these are just the first steps in the procedural dance which leads to the Governor's May Revise, and ultimately Assembly and Senate conference committee input before the budget can be finalized. It should also be noted that the one-time nature of many of the increases may be related to the Governor's cautionary aversion to committing tax revenues from stock market capital gains to ongoing programs.

Inadequate funding of our schools in the past has certainly taken its toll in many ways and we have a whole generation of students who have been short-changed because of it. The Governor is addressing these deficiencies and for the third year in a row has made education his highest priority; recognizing that an educated workforce is the key to our economic and social prosperity. The Legislature may well push for improvements in other areas of the Budget, but the Governor has proven that he can stand his ground. .

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