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BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Date: November 20, 2015

SUPERINTENDENT – JOSÉ L. BANDA

BC NO.	FROM	REGARDING
S-96	José Banda	School Services of California's Sacramento Weekly Update

CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER – GERARDO CASTILLO

BC NO.	FROM	REGARDING
CBO-50	Gerardo Castillo	Response to Question About Cadillac Tax

CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER – GABE ROSS

BC NO.	FROM	REGARDING
CCO-247	Gabe Ross	Op/Ed Submission to the Bee

CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER – CANCY MCARN

BC NO.	FROM	REGARDING
CHRO-39	Cancy McArn	Special Assistant to the Board of Education



**SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD COMMUNICATION**

BC NO: S-96

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - <i>(Check a Box)</i>	No:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date: 11/20/2015
Approved by: José L. Banda, Superintendent						
To the Members of the Board of Education						
Prepared by: José L. Banda, Superintendent					Contact Email: Superintendent@scusd.edu	
Subject: School Services of California's Sacramento Weekly Update						

Attached is the weekly update from School Services of California for your review.



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DATE: November 20, 2015

TO: Jose Banda
Superintendent

AT: Sacramento City Unified School District

FROM: Your SSC Legislative Team

RE: *SSC's Sacramento Weekly Update*

State Budget Outlook

The big news in the State Capital this week was the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) assessment of the California economy and State Budget. The report, *The 2016-17 Budget: California Fiscal Outlook*, provides a preview of the direction Governor Jerry Brown's January Budget will likely take based on current-year revenue and expenditure trends through October 2015. The report concludes that the State Budget is in a better position to weather an economic downturn than it has been in decades. Mac Taylor, the head of the LAO, summarized the outlook saying, "This is a very positive situation."

In response to the LAO's broad findings, Michael Cohen, the director of the Department of Finance (DOF) issued a statement saying, "The strong economy is good news for California, but the recession scenario outlined by the Legislative Analyst is a sobering reminder that we must continue to pursue fiscal discipline, pay down liabilities, and build up our Rainy Day Fund during these fleeting good times."

The LAO forecasts \$3.6 billion in higher revenue in the current year than is reflected in the 2015-16 State Budget. For 2016-17, the LAO projects General Fund revenue of \$1.8 billion more than the DOF. Combined with relatively slow caseload growth and an assumption that no new programs will be created, the forecast shows growing budget surpluses through 2019-20. State revenues are projected to increase at an average annual rate of 3.7% from 2015-16 through 2019-20, while expenditures are expected to rise at an average annual rate of 3.2%, resulting in a growing operating surplus, which reaches \$3.9 billion by 2019-20.

As for Proposition 98, the current-year minimum guarantee is revised upward by \$739 million, according to the LAO, with \$195 million attributable to the maintenance factor, which will be fully repaid by the end of 2015-16. For the budget year, the LAO estimates that the Proposition 98 guarantee will increase \$2.3 billion, or 3.3%, above the revised level for 2015-16. After adjusting for the release of one-time spending in 2015-16, the LAO estimates that \$3.6 billion will be available for new ongoing spending in 2016-17.

California's Education Spending—Ranking the States

Like recent years, the LAO's outlook will be welcome news to state lawmakers as they react to Governor Brown's Budget to be released in January. Perhaps state resources can be directed to address some of the shortcomings in the state's education funding as reported by the California Budget and Policy Center. According to a recent report, the state's support for its K-12 public school system lags the nation by almost any measure.

- In 2014-15, California ranked 42nd among all states in spending per K-12 student after adjusting for differences in the cost-of-living in each state. California schools spent \$10,139 per K-12 student, \$1,900 less than the \$12,040 per student spent by the nation as a whole.
- California ranked 36th among all states in K-12 spending as a share of the state economy in 2014-15. California's K-12 school spending in 2014-15 was 3.48% of state personal income—a measure that reflects the size of the state's economy—compared to 3.88% in the nation as a whole. Gauging school spending as a share of the personal income received by the state's residents takes into account differences in states' wealth and thus in their capacity to support K-12 schools.
- California ranked last in the nation in the number of K-12 students per teacher in 2014-15. California's student-to-teacher ratio was greater than 22-to-1, more than 40% higher than the national ratio of 15.5 students per teacher.
- California ranked last or close to last in the nation in the number of students per staff. California's student-to-librarian ratio was more than 7,500-to-1 (ranking 51st), its student-to-guidance-counselor ratio was 785-to-1 (51st), and its student-to-administrator ratio was 312-to-1 (47th) in 2011-12, the most recent year for which data is available.

Thanksgiving Break

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, we will not be providing the *Sacramento Weekly Update* next week unless there is breaking news; we will return to our regular production schedule in December.

We at School Services of California, Inc., wish you a Happy Thanksgiving!

Nancy LaCasse
Robert Miyashiro

Note: The LAO's report is good news, but many challenges await public schools as funding increases slow.

Legislative Analyst's Office Forecasts Growing Surpluses, But . . .

By Robert Miyashiro
School Services of California, Inc.
November 19, 2015

On November 18, 2015, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released its annual long-term forecast of the California economy, General Fund revenues, expenditures, and the state's budget reserve. The report, *The 2016-17 Budget: California Fiscal Outlook*, provides a preview of the direction the Governor's January Budget will likely take, based on current-year revenue and expenditure trends through October 2015. The report concludes that, "The State Budget is better prepared for an economic downturn than it has been at any point in decades."

State General Fund

The LAO, the Legislature's nonpartisan fiscal advisor, forecasts \$3.6 billion in higher revenue in the current year than is reflected in the 2015-16 State Budget. For 2016-17, the office projects General Fund revenue of \$1.8 billion more than the Administration's Department of Finance (DOF). Combined with relatively slow caseload growth and an assumption that no new programs will be created, the forecast shows growing budget surpluses through 2019-20.

Under the LAO's main or standard economic forecast, state revenues will increase at an average annual rate of 3.7% from 2015-16 through 2019-20, from \$116.3 billion to \$134.5 billion. At the same time, General Fund expenditures are expected to rise at an average annual rate of 3.2%. The state's operating surplus rises from \$1 billion in the current year to \$3.9 billion by 2019-20.

The LAO cautions, however, that the current economic expansion will not last forever and that a sizable reserve is the key to managing the next downturn with minimal disruptions to public services. Thus, the LAO offers that, "Less additional ongoing spending on public programs now probably would mean fewer difficult choices about those programs later."

Proposition 98

2014-15 and 2015-16: The LAO concludes that the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee for last year must be recomputed to reflect revised figures for General Fund revenues, which results in an increase in the guarantee of \$1.3 billion. Of this amount, \$541 million is attributable to a maintenance factor payment. Due to the operation of a rarely activated provision of Proposition 98 designed to protect the General Fund from spikes in the minimum guarantee, only the amount attributable to the maintenance factor payment is carried forward in the base for 2015-16.

For the current year, the Proposition 98 guarantee is revised upward by \$739 million, according to the LAO. Again, an upward revision to state revenues drives up the guarantee. Of the \$739 million, \$195 million is attributable to the maintenance factor, which will be fully repaid by the end of 2015-16.

In a significant departure from recent years, the upward revision in state revenues no longer drives a dollar-for-dollar increase in the Proposition 98 guarantee. Instead, the increase in the guarantee is funded

almost entirely from increases in local property taxes, thus allowing General Fund resources to be directed to other legislative priorities. According to the LAO's analysis, of the \$739 million increase in the minimum guarantee in 2015-16, only \$27 million will be funded from the General Fund, with the balance coming from rising property taxes. Assessed valuations are expected to increase about 6% annually, slightly above the 5.5% assumed in the State Budget plan.

The LAO estimates that about \$2.3 billion will be available in the current year for one-time purposes, with about \$2 billion related to the upward revision to the guarantee in both 2014-15 and 2015-16 and \$300 million related to average daily attendance (ADA) related savings. Statewide ADA is estimated to have fallen from budgeted levels by 13,000 in 2014-15 and 21,000 in 2015-16.

2016-17: For the budget year, the LAO estimates that the Proposition 98 guarantee will increase \$2.3 billion, or 3.3%, above the revised level for 2015-16. Like the current-year revision, most of the increase for 2016-17 will be paid by increases in the local property tax. On a statewide basis, the property tax is estimate to increase by 7.8%, well in excess of the increase in General Fund revenues. After adjusting for the release of one-time spending in 2015-16, the LAO estimates that \$3.6 billion will be available for new ongoing spending in 2016-17.

Outlook for Later Years: The LAO suggests that its out year projections should be viewed more as a likely scenario rather than as a forecast of actual economic and revenue outcomes. Their forecast assumes that revenues related to the Proposition 30 temporary taxes will be phased out as is required under current law. In this light, the LAO offers other significant conclusions:

- *Recession*—Under a recession scenario with state revenues dropping more than \$8 billion in 2017-18, the Proposition 98 guarantee would decline by \$4.6 billion.
- *California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS)*—Between 2015-16 and 2019-20, the last year of the LAO's forecast horizon, CalSTRS payments by local educational agencies will increase \$3 billion. Under the LAO's main or standard forecast, this obligation will consume almost 40% of all new Proposition 98 revenues. Under their recession scenario, "growth in the minimum guarantee would be less than the estimated increase in CalSTRS costs."
- *Proposition 98 Reserve and Reserve Caps*—The conditions that would require a contribution to the Proposition 98 reserve and thus trigger caps on district reserves in the following year will not be met through 2019-20. While the Proposition 98 maintenance factor will be fully repaid in 2015-16, state revenues "would need to experience a year-over-year surge of at least several billion dollars relative to our (the LAO's) projections" in order to meet all of the conditions to trigger the cap on district reserves.
- *Cost-of-Living Adjustments*—Under the main forecast, the Proposition 98 guarantee grows by only 1.6% in 2018-19 and 2.2% in 2019-20 as Proposition 30 temporary tax revenues expire. These increases are less than projected cost-of-living adjustments, which are forecast at 2.5% and 2.4%, respectively.
- *Maintenance Factor*—While the state pays off the Proposition 98 maintenance factor in 2015-16, maintenance factor obligations are again created commencing in 2016-17. By 2019-20, this obligation will reach \$6.3 billion under the LAO's main scenario.

- *Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) Implementation*—Full implementation of the LCFF will stall out in 2017-18, as the state moves from 90% of full implementation in 2015-16 to 96% in 2017-18. Through the remainder of the forecast period, there is essentially no progress toward closing the LCFF funding gap.

To access the LAO’s full report, click [here](#).

Note: There is a tradeoff between lowering investment risk and paying down the retirement fund’s unfunded liability.

CalPERS Pay-Down Plan Isn’t Fast Enough for Gov. Jerry Brown

By John Myers
Los Angeles Times
November 20, 2015

If there is one thing that Gov. Jerry Brown has made a calling card since returning to office in 2011, it’s a push toward paying down government debt.

And yet his reaction to Wednesday’s decision to do just that by directors of the California Public Employees’ Retirement System was an angry one.

“I am deeply disappointed that the CalPERS board reversed course,” Brown said in a written statement.

The nation’s largest pension fund voted to lower its estimate of future investment returns from 7.5% to 6.5% over 20 years. The move will increase payments by taxpayers, but CalPERS says it will more quickly pay down the \$117-billion debt for pensions already owed to 1.7 million government workers and retirees.

Brown wanted it to happen even faster. His criticism hinted at a larger struggle, a political tug of war between Brown and public employee unions.

“The fight is interesting to watch between a Democratic governor and a Democratic constituency,” said Richard Costigan, a CalPERS director who pushed this week for a more aggressive policy that would have reduced the debt more quickly. “A Democratic governor wanted to take a more hard-line stance.”

For years, CalPERS critics have warned that the pension fund was using overly optimistic projections for its investment portfolio, projections that would leave taxpayers picking up an ever larger share of the obligations made to state and local government workers.

CalPERS directors partially relented on that front on Wednesday, agreeing to adjust the projections but on a more conservative course.

The decision will increase amounts paid to CalPERS for state government workers’ future retirement. As the employer, the state’s general fund already pays CalPERS \$5 billion a year. And for a governor who preaches lower spending, it seems jarring to think Brown would actually push to increase the size of the state’s annual pension costs.

Jarring, that is, until one considers Brown's real strategy: to help pay down the pension obligation now, when funds are available, rather than face the question in an economic downturn. It also would take revenues off the table for other budget fights in Sacramento in 2016.

That's where the disagreement comes in with organized labor.

As CalPERS leaders voted to rejigger the mix of taxpayer money and Wall Street investment profits, the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office on Wednesday [released a new projection](#) showing billions in unexpected tax dollars are likely to materialize over the next few years.

Sources close to both CalPERS and the Brown administration said Thursday that the governor had been privately lobbying some of the pension fund directors for weeks to push for a faster, deeper cut in the long-term estimates of what will be funded by Wall Street investments. In other words, he wanted to set aside more tax revenues for paying pension obligations.

Doing so would strengthen his hand should he be asked to expand government programs. Or it could help stave off contract demands by state employee unions with whom he's now negotiating. One of those unions, composed of state engineers and scientists, protested on the streets of Sacramento on Thursday in support of a more generous contract than Brown is offering.

The governor, in so many of his actions over the last few years, has made it clear he wants to pay off as much debt as he can right now.

"We're just kicking the can down the road," said Richard Gillihan, the governor's human resources director and a CalPERS board member. At a pension fund committee meeting Tuesday, Gillihan proposed that the expected investment return rate be lowered immediately to 6.5% — and not over two decades.

The majority of the CalPERS board comes from the ranks of public employee unions. For a while this week, it looked like they may have been beaten. The committee on Tuesday ultimately approved a middle-ground approach between Gillihan's recommendation and what union representatives had endorsed.

But 24 hours later, the unions' preferred approach was adopted. "You've done a lot of reforms," Jai Sookprasert, a lobbyist for the California School Employees Assn., told the pension fund leaders. "Let's give them a chance."

The political positioning notwithstanding, taxpayers will still be relied on for more of the pension equation. But the larger tug of war in Sacramento goes on. Neither union members nor Brown, who at best has proved to be only their occasional ally, are likely to give up any time soon.

Note: The change in term limits could return more stable leadership to the Assembly and Senate.

Gripping Power for the Long Term?

By Laurel Rosenhall
CALmatters
October 21, 2015

Maywood, CA. -- A politician who will soon hold one of the most powerful positions in California was walking along the industrial banks of the Los Angeles River last week when an artist smoking a cigarette stopped him to lodge a few complaints.

The area has graffiti but no murals, Robert Cortes said. Too few trees and too many dope dealers.

“You’ve got a lot of work to do, bro,” Cortes said to Assemblyman Anthony Rendon, who will take over next year as speaker of the California Assembly.

When he does, the stage is set for Rendon to become a leader unlike any California has seen in 20 years. Changes to legislative term limits approved by voters three years ago have now taken hold, creating the potential for a period of stability unseen since Willie Brown – the self-proclaimed “ayatollah of the Assembly” – left the speaker’s office in 1995. In the 20 years before that, California had just two assembly speakers. In the 20 years since, there have been 11.

Rendon, a Democrat from the Los Angeles city of Lakewood, will take over in 2016 with the possibility of holding office for nine more years. He’ll lead a house with increasing seniority, as the new term limit rules allow lawmakers to hold their positions for 12 years. That’s twice as long as they could stay in the Assembly under the old system.

And Rendon, 47, will be working across the aisle with a new Republican leader – Assemblyman Chad Mayes of Yucca Valley – who will take the helm next year with the possibility of staying in office for 11 more years.

“Philosophically, we are probably in two different places,” said Mayes, 38. “But personality-wise, I think we’re both cordial and we will get along well.”

Longer terms and steady leadership could have a calming affect on the Capitol, allowing lawmakers to settle into the responsibility of their positions rather than plotting their next political move. The changes may help lawmakers build expertise in areas of government – like education, water policy or health care – that are now overseen by a constantly rotating cast.

Rendon, who has a PhD in political science, used his own experience chairing the Assembly’s water, parks and wildlife committee to illustrate the potential shift. He took control of the committee the first year he was elected to office and negotiated a \$7.5 billion water bond while learning policy on the fly.

“If I had stayed in that committee chairmanship for ten years, I could probably tell a lobbyist when I thought they were full of (crap),” he said, using a word that rhymes with sit.

“I could probably tell a water district official that they were not being honest with me.”

In the coming years, Rendon said, he and his colleagues will “have the ability to do that.”

Of course, there are no guarantees they’ll succeed.

Rendon faces numerous challenges, including some ambitious colleagues who want a shot at being speaker too. His caucus could pass the baton to someone else at any time. And Rendon is taking over a Democratic caucus that is divided over some key California issues, including technology and the environment.

The grandson of Mexican immigrants, Rendon’s political background is solidly liberal – including stints leading the California League of Conservation Voters and Plaza de la Raza Child Development Services. He’s been a robust fundraiser, receiving 29 percent of his campaign cash from organized labor.

Yet he landed the speakership with significant support from a bloc of business-friendly Democrats who break with progressive Democrats on environmental issues to cast votes that are sympathetic to the oil industry. Satisfying both bands within his party will be tough.

“Are we worried about him? I’m not,” said Kathryn Phillips, a lobbyist for the Sierra Club, which gave Rendon top scores for his voting record. “He is very smart, and educated about the environment.”

It remains to be seen whether legislators with more time in the same office can make a difference on so many issues that have stymied the Capitol. The state has a health care system for the poor that is about to go broke. Tuition has skyrocketed at public universities. A volatile tax structure subjects government to chaotic booms and busts.

“The issue that has suffered the most due to term limits is public education,” said former Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez, who held the post for four years.

“Figuring out how to best address the inequities in our education system – the achievement gap – will be fundamental. The Assembly will now have the opportunity to think this through and identify the solutions.”

And yet it’s possible that longer terms will wind up making politicians feel more connected to interest groups in Sacramento than voters back at home.

“Politics in Sacramento can be remote and abstract,” Rendon said during an interview along the gritty riverbank in his district, where just a trickle of water flowed down a channel lined with warehouses, graffiti and folks seeking shelter under noisy overpasses.

Then he waved toward the frustrated constituent who had stopped him earlier.

“You have to come here and talk to those guys,” Rendon said. “Otherwise you can kind of... forget why you’re there and what you’re supposed to be doing.”



Note: Switching to the new standards appears to be easier than finding appropriate instructional materials to teach to those standards.

Curriculum Materials a Sticking Point In Common Core Implementation

By Louis Freedberg and Theresa Harrington
EdSource
November 18, 2015

During the five years since California adopted the Common Core State Standards for mathematics and English language arts, the search for high-quality textbooks and curriculum materials has been a sticking point, in some cases a major one, in effectively and speedily implementing the new standards.

That's according to leaders in several school districts where EdSource is tracking Common Core implementation. School districts are making progress in finding and selecting the right materials, but the complicated effort is still underway in these districts and many others across the state.

"Preparation and timing of available resources has been the most difficult aspect of this rollout," said Fresno Unified Superintendent Michael Hanson when the state released scores from the Smarter Balanced tests, which were based on the Common Core standards and administered last spring. After going through a months-long process of piloting new materials with 350 teachers, Hanson said, "we're only now using appropriate math materials."

Hanson is not alone. In four of six districts being tracked by EdSource (Fresno, Elk Grove, Garden Grove and San Jose Unified) as they implement the Common Core, district leaders said that finding appropriate instructional materials has been a significant obstacle to teaching classes aligned with the new standards.

"The biggest challenge has been the lack of textbooks and materials," said Gabriela Mafi, superintendent of Garden Grove Unified in Orange County.

The root of the problem, argued Phil Daro, a principal author of the Common Core math standards, is that "districts tried to switch to the Common Core before there were any books aligned with them."

That, however, was not the fault of districts. The state adopted the Common Core in 2010, but the State Board of Education only approved a recommended list of K-8 math textbooks and materials in January 2014 – and only did so two weeks ago for K-8 materials in English language arts. During that five-year period, students took new Smarter Balanced tests aligned with the standards.

Textbook publishers were slow to come up with materials that were fully aligned to the Common Core standards. In many cases, materials that were purportedly aligned with them were just hastily updated versions of older materials.

"In some situations I think publishers have taken a sticker and put it on the old set of standards and called it a Common Core book," said Superintendent Chris Hoffman of Elk Grove Unified near Sacramento, in an interview with EdSource last spring.

By now, however, major textbook publishers have had time to develop materials that are more directly aligned to the Common Core standards. That is reflected in the fact that most of the materials on the state's

recommended lists for both English and math were produced by publishing giants like Pearson, Houghton Mifflin and McGraw-Hill.

Adding to the complexity of the textbook adoption process, California is ceding more authority to districts to pick their own materials, as are several other states. According to the American Association of Publishers, California is one of only 19 “adoption states” that “adopts” textbooks and instructional materials. But while State Board of Education still reviews and recommends materials for math and English in kindergarten through 8th grade, it doesn’t require districts to buy or use them.

As a result of the passage of AB 1246 in 2012, districts can choose their own materials for those grades, as long as they are aligned with the state’s academic content standards and involve teachers in the review process. Some other “adoption states” are moving in a similar direction, representing what an EdWeek report characterized as “a sea change in K-12 policy.”

At the high school level, California districts are free to adopt whatever curriculum materials they chose, as has always been the case. This is because the state constitution requires the State Board of Education to adopt instructional materials for grades K-8, but not for high school.

The challenges in finding appropriate textbooks and other instructional materials has affected districts’ abilities to implement the Common Core, according to some education leaders.

Garden Grove’s Mafi said her district chose not to introduce the Common Core ahead of what she described as “the state requirement” to implement the standards last year, in part because it didn’t have materials it needed to do so sooner. Mafi said the district also wanted more time to prepare teachers “and provide extensive professional development.”

The district “piloted” math textbooks from a list of materials recommended by the state for kindergarten through 8th grade from September 2014 through January 2015. The pilot consisted of teachers trying out the materials, then reviewing data as to their effectiveness, before recommending them to the district’s elected board of trustees for formal adoption.

Officials in other districts worried that the dearth of adequate materials affected classroom instruction – and added to the anxiety levels of teachers asked to take on yet another major reform. “Our biggest concern is that when teachers are frustrated and don’t have tools they need, they’re less effective,” said Jackie Zeller, San Jose Unified’s director of secondary curriculum, instruction and EL services in an interview earlier this year.

In many districts, teachers have been integrally involved in trying out new materials, adapting existing ones or creating their own, instead of waiting for the state to lead the way. They piloted textbooks and online resources, pored over existing materials to figure out which units were aligned to the new standards and collaborated with each other to discuss the best options to meet their students’ needs.

This represents a change from what often occurred under No Child Left Behind and other top-down reforms in which districts typically selected textbooks from state-adopted lists. These included materials like McGraw Hill’s Open Court Reading series, which laid out highly structured lesson plans, and which were very unpopular among many teachers who sought more creativity in their classrooms.

In Visalia Unified, the Common Core materials review process included setting up a large committee with teacher representatives from every school in the district. “This took many months and much discussion about the standards, the quality of the materials, and how to approach instruction,” Superintendent Craig Wheaton said. The materials his Central Valley district adopted, he said, “are designed to support teachers as they develop lessons. They are not meant to be all that they use.”

Discontent with curriculum materials emerged as a top issue among thousands of educators who attended the July 31 “Better Together” teachers summit held at 33 locations throughout the state. Kitty Dixon, senior vice president at the Santa Cruz-based New Teacher Center and one of the summit organizers, said many teachers who attended were frustrated by the lack of appropriate materials on the market – and consequently by the time and effort they spent pulling their own materials from the Internet.

Marci Gould, who teaches 4th grade at Buena Vista Elementary in Walnut Creek, said at the time her district had not yet adopted Common Core-aligned instructional materials. “My biggest concern is not having a set curriculum or text as a basis,” she said. “I spend a lot of personal time developing my own curriculum based off the Common Core standards.”

There are both pros and cons to these home-grown efforts. “Some of it is brilliant, some of it is goofy,” Daro said. But he said on the plus side these materials “will get better over time” and the process has had the benefit of deeply immersing more teachers both in mathematics and the Common Core standards to guide their instruction.

As districts sorted through materials that publishers claimed were aligned with the Common Core, some delayed adopting new materials and continued to use old textbooks.

“We’ve had to do some bridge work trying to use the existing texts with the new standards,” Elk Grove’s Hoffman said. “We made changes in mathematics this past year and did an English language arts adoption at the elementary level, so we’re still really early in this process of trying to put all these resources in place.”

Contrary to some other district leaders, Santa Ana Unified Superintendent Rick Miller said he was not overly concerned about the challenge of finding curriculum materials. In Miller’s opinion, more important than the materials is the quality of teaching going on in the classroom. “I think the primary instructional tool in the classroom is the teacher,” he said.

That view was similar to the opinion expressed by Aspire’s chief academic officer, Elise Darwish. “I’m pretty agnostic about materials,” she said. “I actually think it’s so much more about the teacher, the instruction and the assessments. I don’t want to say I don’t care about materials, but I think you can upgrade instruction, no matter what your materials.”

Ed Winchester, Santa Ana’s executive director of secondary curriculum and instruction, said the district initially decided in 2013 to refrain from adopting new mathematics materials. After spending a couple of months looking over what the market had to offer, he said, the district reviewers decided that those published materials were mostly “hastily adapted from...current programs.” “We just decided we were going to write a lot of our own curriculum and find materials that matched our needs,” he said.

Santa Ana ended up supplementing existing textbooks with four new, free online resources, which offer a range of support including downloadable K-12 lesson plans in mathematics and English language arts.

These are: EngageNY, developed by New York’s Department of Education; materials from the Georgia Department of Education; and resources from the Silicon Valley Math Initiative and the Irvine Math Project.

This spring, Santa Ana will pilot Houghton Mifflin’s “[Go Math](#)” at seven elementary schools. At the same time, the district will continue to use open source and other digital materials.

For many districts, the state’s adoption of recommended lists for both the math and English language arts materials came too late to be useful – and left district staff members doing a lot of the heavy lifting themselves.

Hanson said Fresno Unified spent nearly \$7.5 million on its K-8 math materials adoption and trained teachers last summer to implement the new instruction in 2015-16.

Adam Ebrahim, a literacy consultant with the Fresno County Office of Education, praised the way Fresno Unified found or created instructional materials. Teachers were allowed time to collaborate and search for resources that responded to their students’ needs, he said.

“If we want to really ramp up our classrooms, we have to empower teachers to design their own curriculum,” he said. “I understand the grumbling, but if teachers aren’t getting the time they need to do that, they should take it up in bargaining sessions.”

In theory at least, the process going forward for adopting math and English language arts textbooks should be easier, since the state has now adopted curriculum frameworks in both subjects, along with recommended lists of instructional materials. (The California Department of Education defines frameworks as “blueprints for implementing the content standards.”)

But that does not mean the process for finding the right materials, and its outcome, is fully resolved. Concerns about the adequacy especially of math materials have been raised, among others, by William Schmidt, who runs Michigan State University’s Center for the Study of Curriculum, and Morgan Polikoff, an assistant professor at the University of Southern California’s Rossier School of Education. EdReports, a national nonprofit organization, has also issued a fierce critique of textbooks claiming to be Common Core-aligned, although the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics has strongly disputed its conclusions.

School districts are at various stages in trying out and implementing curriculum materials – some drawn from the state lists and some not.

In San Jose Unified, for example, teachers developed their own K-5 English language arts and math units with the support of WestEd, said Jason Willis, the district’s assistant superintendent of community engagement and accountability. The district is using two on-line programs to supplement the K-5 English language arts instruction and is supplementing its math instruction with materials created by TERC, a not-for-profit educational development organization.

The district’s middle schools piloted online English language arts instructional materials last year that were implemented this fall for intervention, long-term English learners and special needs students, Willis said. Middle school math teachers have been trying out College Board’s “Springboard” math curriculum which is on the state’s recommended list, and are going to recommend to the school board that it be adopted for

use going forward. At the high school level Algebra 1, geometry and Algebra 2 classes have began using the “Springboard” curriculum as well.

What impact this patchwork of curriculum materials will have on student performance and instruction is as yet unknown. But State Board of Education member Patricia Rucker, a former teacher who is a legislative advocate for the California Teachers Association, said she believes progress has been made. The state, she says, now has high-quality math and English curriculum “frameworks,” as well as recommended materials to go with them.

At the state board’s most recent meeting in Sacramento this month, she acknowledged that getting to this point has taken longer to accomplish than many teachers anticipated and that students were assessed on the Common Core standards before the curriculum was fully implemented. “We did a lot of that work out of order,” she said. “And we didn’t really take time to really appreciate the work that had to be done at each stage.”



**SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD COMMUNICATION**

BC NO: CBO-50

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - <i>(Check a Box)</i>	No:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date: 11/20/2015
Approved by: José L. Banda, Superintendent						
To the Members of the Board of Education						
Prepared by: Gerardo Castillo, Chief Business Officer					Contact Email: Gerardo-Castillo@scusd.edu	
Subject: Response to Question About Cadillac Tax						

At last night's Board Meeting, President Woo asked if employees are required to pay Cadillac Tax. He heard for the first time from School Services of California, that employees will also have to pay.

Based on our research, employees will pay their share of Cadillac Tax if they are contributing towards health benefits. For instance, if employees contribute 10% towards health benefits and the health benefits are subject to Cadillac Tax, the employees will pay the 10% of the penalty.

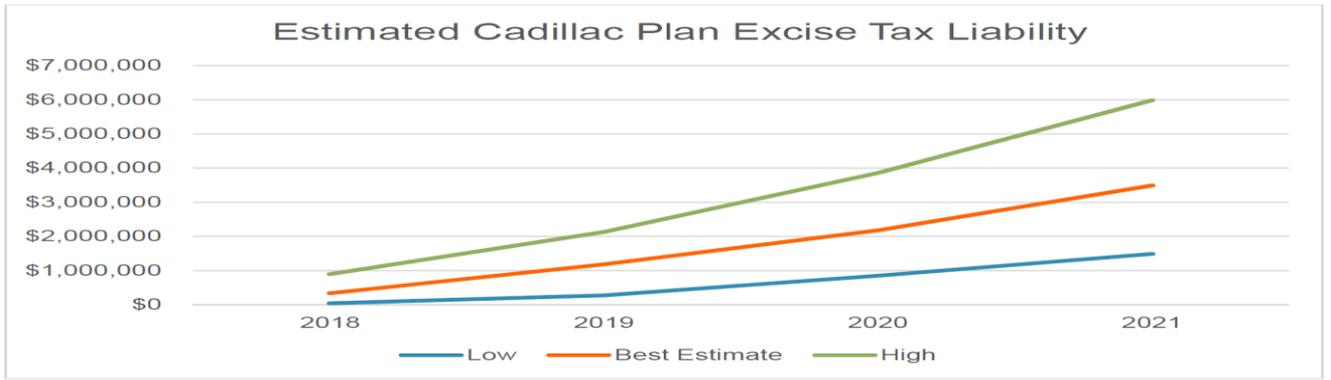
In our case, the District contributes 100% towards the premium; the full cost of the Cadillac Tax will be the District's responsibility.

From School Services perspective, if the District pays Cadillac Tax, all (employer and employees) pay because there are fewer funds to discuss at the negotiation table. I agree with this statement.

Under the Cadillac Tax, it is the responsibility of the carriers to pay the tax on the employers' behalf, however, we then anticipate that the carriers will place the paid Cadillac Tax into the next renewal as a line item in order to recoup those funds. Since it would be part of the renewal, the only way employees would pay the Cadillac Tax is through any employee contributions.

There are no specific requirements under the Excise Tax mandate that states that employees are required to pay a Cadillac Tax.

I would like to take this opportunity to share information with you based on the Health Care Reform Excise Tax Analysis dated October 22, 2015.



Sacramento City Unified School District Cadillac Tax liability will be approximately \$337,000 in 2018, increasing to approximately \$3.5 million in 2021. Projected Excise Tax Liability is highly sensitive to future healthcare trends. Under the low trend scenario, the estimated 2021 Excise Tax liability is \$1.5 million. However, the high trend results in 2021 Excise Tax liability projection of \$6.0 million.

In 2018, Health Net costs attributable to the total estimated Cadillac Tax liability is 93.43% and Western Health Advantage is 6.57%. In 2021, Health Net costs attributable to the total estimated Cadillac Tax liability is 98.68% and Western Health Advantage is 1.32%.

Please contact me if you have any questions.



**SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD COMMUNICATION**

BC NO: CCO-247

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - <i>(Check a Box)</i>	No:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date: 11/20/2015
Approved by: José L. Banda, Superintendent						
To the Members of the Board of Education						
Prepared by: Gabe Ross, Chief Communications Officer					Contact Email: gabe-ross@scusd.edu	
Subject: Op/Ed Submission to the Bee						

We have submitted an opinion piece to the Sacramento Bee's Viewpoints section about the district's efforts over the last five years to improve the quality of food served in cafeterias and our work to educate students about healthy nutritional choices. This op/ed is our response to the Bee's story this week on peaches from China.

The Bee's front-page story on our district's purchase of canned peaches from China ("Sacramento City Unified faces criticism for buying Chinese canned fruit," Nov. 15) rightly pointed out an oversight in our purchasing process that we are working to correct. Although we are confident in the safety of the fruit and in the legality of our actions, our intention was to purchase domestically grown fruit and we are putting in place better checks and balances to prevent such mishaps in the future.

Our fear now is that the media's emphasis on our paperwork error diminishes our efforts over the last five years to become a farm-to-school model for high- needs districts like ours.

Since creation of our Healthy Foods Task Force in 2010, much has been accomplished to improve the quality of food served in our cafeterias through the purchase of fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables and grains. Keep in mind that we are talking about a lot of food. Our Nutrition Services serves 50,000 meals a day, including free breakfast at all 74 campuses and free supper for students who attend our 65 after-school programs. In some neighborhoods, including the notorious "food deserts" of South Sacramento, the only fresh food students eat in a day is provided by us.

Through the federal government's School Meals Program, we are reimbursed for our costs of feeding children at a rate of between about \$1.50 and \$3 per meal. Anyone who shops for groceries knows how tempting it would be to stretch those dollars by eliminating costlier fresh fruits and vegetables from daily menus. We haven't done that. In fact, in just five years our district has been able to establish salad bars seasonally stocked with local fruits and vegetables in every school's cafeteria. At various times of year, students are sampling apples from Stockton, mandarins from Penryn, pears from Courtland and brown rice from Sacramento and Butte counties. Despite stereotypes about kids and healthy food, the fresh fruit is a big hit with kids – even with notoriously picky-eating teens.

And SCUSD is stepping up its game when it comes to buying local produce. Just this week, we learned that we will be receiving a \$100,000 federal grant to support our project FEAST (Food Exploration and School Transformation). A collaboration with Soil Born Farms and Food Literacy Center, the project aims to increase by 20 percent the number of local vegetable purchases and increase by 80 percent the number of students offered local vegetables at meals.

During a recent visit to the Oak Ridge Elementary School, fruits of this labor were evident. Kindergarteners lined both sides of the school's salad bar, busily pointing out to adult servers their fruit and vegetable choices. Some wanted apple slices and grapes. Others opted for green leafy lettuces and mixed fruit. The tomato salsa was a big hit as were the jalapeno slices.

Outside, older students awaited their lunch period by tending the school's garden and newly planted orchard. Together, this tiny farm functions as a living, growing science lab. In time, fruits and vegetables grown in the garden will be picked for snacks and cooking lessons coupled with instruction in the classroom.

Oak Ridge is one of three elementary schools that will pilot the FEAST program. Once a week after school, the Food Literacy Center will teach students at pilot sites about the value of locally grown fruits and vegetables, how to read nutrition labels, cooking skills and environmental impacts of their food

choices. The lessons will be tied to the work in the school gardens. For example, if Soil Born plants and harvests snap peas in the gardens in January, Nutrition Services will procure snap peas for school meals for the month of January and Food Literacy Center will incorporate snap peas into its recipes and weekly lessons that month.

The goal is for all schools to have similar opportunities for students to learn how to live long, healthy lives through proper nutrition. More importantly, we strive to fill our students' plates with not just great food but an education grounded in values that Sacramento holds dear: Sustainability, environmentalism and respect for the community. We understand that we have much work to do to attain this vision. But rest assured, the goal will not be lost among cans of fruit.

Brenda Padilla
Director, Nutrition Services
Sacramento City Unified School District



**SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD COMMUNICATION**

BC NO: CHRO-39

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - <i>(Check a Box)</i>	No:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date: 11/20/2015
Approved by: José L. Banda, Superintendent						
To the Members of the Board of Education						
Prepared by: Cancy McArn, Chief Human Resources Officer					Contact Email: cancy-mcarn@scusd.edu	
Subject: Special Assistant to the Board of Education						

Thank you for your participation in the interview process for this unique position. I am pleased to share that Nathaniel Browning has accepted the position of Special Assistant to the Board of Education and he will be offered a contract contingent upon fingerprint and TB clearance.

Given a number of previous obligations, Nathaniel has indicated that he will be available on December 9 and 10 and will have an official start date of January 4. Thank you again for your participation.