



Recovering from the Recession

Pressures ease on California's largest school districts, but stresses remain

Overview

After five years of intense budget cuts that inflicted severe damage on a wide range of programs in and out of the classroom, the state's 30 largest school districts are beginning to recover in some areas, but are still a long way from where they were before the beginning of the Great Recession.

EdSource's 2012 report, *Schools Under Stress: Pressures Mount on California's Largest Districts*, identified a number of stress factors that districts serving one-third of the state's 6.2 million public school students had to cope with during the previous half-decade, in many instances with increasing intensity.

These included "internal" stress factors such as teacher and staff layoffs, larger class sizes, a shorter instructional year, fewer counselors, and cutbacks in summer programs. Others were "external" stress factors such as declining enrollments and coping with the impact of high unemployment and increasing poverty among students and their families.

Our 2013 survey shows that these school districts are experiencing fewer stresses this year compared to last.

Most notably, there has been a dramatic reduction in teacher layoffs. In addition, many districts have been able to restore some or all of their instructional days trimmed in the prior three years because of budget cuts. The foreclosure crisis has eased significantly, and unemployment is lower than it has been in five years, which means some students are likely to be experiencing less stress at home. That should relieve at least some of the pressures on schools to provide a range of support services to ensure that students succeed.

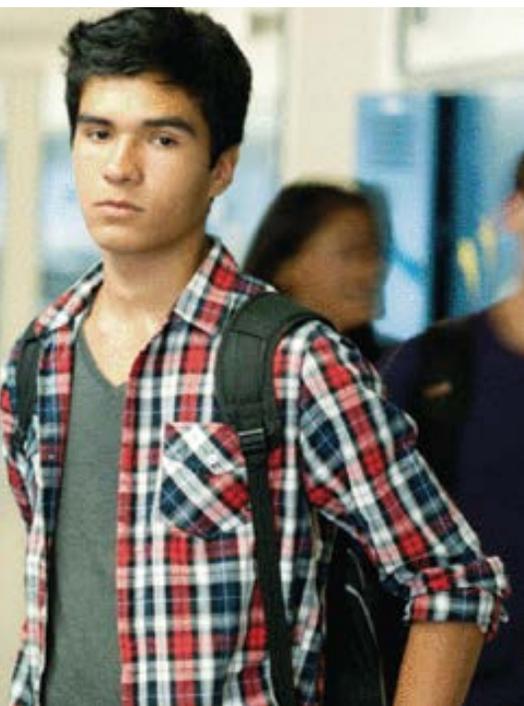
In 2012-13, as a result of the state's slowly improving economy and the passage of the Proposition 30 tax measure in November 2012, school spending remained essentially flat. That was a welcome relief for school districts, which had been forced to make deep cuts for each of the previous four years. The passage of Prop. 30 averted \$6 billion in "trigger cuts," which would have resulted in deep reductions in programs and allowed districts to cut as many as three weeks from their instructional calendar. Voter approval of the initiative after a contentious campaign also sent a welcome message that the public is willing to support public schools, helping to boost morale among educators throughout the state.

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However, districts are still struggling in several areas and are far from where they should be to provide optimal services to their students.

For example, in 2012-13 class sizes continued to rise in kindergarten through third grade. School counselors still remained far below the level recommended by the American Counselors Association. District-based summer classes for students who have fallen behind academically continue to shrink in many districts, and those offering the same programs as in 2011-12 are operating at a radically reduced level compared to where they were in 2007-08. In many districts, enrollments continue to decline, which means schools receive fewer state dollars based on the number of students in attendance. Child poverty levels are steadily rising, posing severe challenges for educators given the high correlation between a student's socioeconomic background and school performance.

Although there were fewer teacher layoffs during the 2012-13 school year, an estimated 27,000 teachers who were laid off during the past five years across the state have not been rehired, meaning that average class sizes are likely to be higher than before the recession. The year-after-year pattern of layoffs discouraged potential teachers from entering the profession, helping to explain the falling numbers of students in teacher preparation programs.

Although unemployment rates have declined, California's overall unemployment rate remains among the highest in the nation. Nearly half of the state's 30 largest districts serve communities with higher unemployment rates than the state average. Almost all districts (26 out of 30) served more children living in poverty in 2011 than before the Great Recession, and statewide childhood poverty is higher than in 2007-08. Because of the high correlation of income levels to student achievement, high poverty levels mean that school districts face additional challenges to ensure that students succeed.

An additional stress factor that school districts had to cope with during the 2012-13 school year was responding to the anxieties of students, staff, and parents about the safety of their campuses following the Newtown, Conn., elementary school massacre in December 2012. Almost two-thirds of the 30 largest districts reported making changes to their safety procedures.

Even more daunting are the challenges school districts face in responding to multiple demands on the accountability and assessment front.

All 30 school districts are still subject to the onerous requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind law. As a result, in 2012-13 an increasing number of schools and districts have been labeled as being in need of "program improvement," which means they have failed to make "adequate yearly progress" for two successive years.

The U.S. Department of Education has so far granted waivers from some of the key portions of the law to 39 states and the District of Columbia. However,



the department rejected California's application for a waiver. Seven of the 30 largest districts surveyed applied through the CORE consortium for a district-level waiver. On Aug. 6, the Department announced it would grant the waiver for one year. The unified districts include Los Angeles, Long Beach, Fresno, Santa Ana, San Francisco, Sacramento City, and Oakland. An eighth district, Sanger Unified, is also part of the consortium.

In addition, school districts are under extreme pressure to prepare for implementation of the Common Core State Standards, which includes preparing students for new assessments that districts will be expected to administer in the 2014-15 school year. However, these assessments are still being developed, and districts will be required to administer them, in many cases, before the Common Core has been fully integrated into the school curriculum. In particular, school districts must figure out ways to adequately prepare teachers for Common Core implementation.

METHODOLOGY

In February 2013, EdSource sent e-mail surveys to the state's 30 districts with the largest enrollments on several of the stress factors discussed in this report. Follow-up phone calls in March and April were made to verify or obtain more information. In almost all cases, information was provided by district officials and could not be checked independently by EdSource. In a handful of cases when districts were not able to provide the requested data, we received information from the teacher's association in a district or on DataQuest, the California Department of Education's database.

Because the 30 largest districts include three high school districts, we also surveyed the next three largest K-12 districts to get information on class sizes in K-3 grades.

For economic indicators and health coverage rates, we used data from the American Community Survey or Current Population Survey of the U.S. Census. The American Community Survey provides data on unemployment rates and poverty rates broken down by school district, but the most recent year for which those figures are available from the U.S. Census is 2011.

DataQuick provided data on notices of default and foreclosures on single-family homes from 2008 to 2012 within the boundaries of the state's 30 largest districts.

WHAT EDSOURCE FOUND

Our survey looked at 11 stress factors. In the section below, we summarize our findings. (More complete descriptions can be found in the body of the report.) A positive trend indicates that school districts are experiencing less stress than in previous years. A negative trend means that schools are experiencing more stress than in previous years. A mixed finding indicates that there may have been positive developments in some districts, but the overall picture is a negative one. Among our 11 stress indicators, five were in a positive direction, four were in a negative direction, and two were mixed.

TREND: *positive*

- **Teacher Layoffs** In spring 2013, the 30 largest districts issued only 848 preliminary layoff notices—or less than 1% of the teaching force—by March 15, the deadline mandated by state law. This was a substantial reduction from just two years earlier, when the same districts issued preliminary layoff notices to 10,854 teachers—or 11% of the teaching force. However, statewide an estimated 27,000 teachers who have been laid off in the past five years have not been rehired.
- **Instructional Year** Eighteen out of California's 30 largest districts have a school year of 180 days, which was the minimum required by law until 2009, when the Legislature allowed school districts to lower the minimum to 175 days. Two districts are within one day of the 180-day threshold. However, six are still at the 175-day level.
- **Unemployment** Unemployment in California has eased in communities across the state from the seasonally unadjusted rate of 12.1% in April 2010 to 8.5% in April 2013. Rates have declined in the communities served by all of the 30 largest districts. However, in 14 of them unemployment rates were higher than the statewide average, in some cases significantly so.
- **Housing Foreclosures** The number of housing foreclosures has declined dramatically from its peak at the height of the housing crisis. In 24 school districts, foreclosures had declined by at least 50%, including seven districts where they had declined by more than 70%. However, statewide almost 100,000 households were foreclosed on, and nearly 150,000 families received notices in 2012. Many more families are still coping with the long-term

economic and psychological effects of foreclosures that occurred during the past five years.

- **Health Coverage** In 19 of the state's 30 largest districts, more children under the age of 18 have health coverage in 2011 than in 2008. In all 30 school districts, the vast majority of children have coverage of some kind. However, in eight districts the proportion of children lacking health coverage is in the double digits. The overall improved coverage also obscures deeper health challenges, such as lack of access to regular dental and vision care, and high-risk behaviors such as drinking, smoking, drug use, and poor eating habits.

TREND: *mixed*

- **Summer Classes** Sixteen of the 30 districts surveyed indicated that they would keep their 2013 programs at last year's level—but those levels in most cases were drastically downsized from where they were at the start of the recession. Seven districts indicated that they would have to cut their programs even further compared to the summer of 2012. Another seven districts were planning to expand their summer programs in the summer of 2013. Cutbacks in summer programs mean that schools lose an important resource for students who are struggling academically and may be in danger of failing to graduate.
- **Declining Enrollment** Enrollments in 17 of the state's 30 largest school districts have declined since 2007-08, reducing state funding based on attendance while overhead and other costs remain fixed or rise. During this period, statewide enrollment has decreased by

WHAT EDSOURCE FOUND *cont.*

1%, but in many districts significantly more than that. On the other hand, enrollments in 10 of the districts have increased, which has helped those districts better manage the economic crisis during the past five years.

TREND: *negative*

■ **K-3 Class Sizes** California's ambitious Class Size Reduction program, intended to bring K-3 class sizes down to an average of 1 teacher for every 20 students, continues to unravel. Eleven districts had larger classes in two or more K-3 grades in 2012-13 than in 2011-12. Twelve districts now have 30 or more students in all K-3 grades, and another three have 28 or more. Some bright spots are that three districts—including the state's two largest, Los Angeles Unified and San Diego Unified—have been able to keep class sizes to 24 students or fewer in all of their K-3 classes. But the 1:20 teacher-student ratio that was in place five years ago in every district has disappeared. Only one district—Stockton Unified—reported having a class size of 20 students, and that was only in kindergarten.

■ **Counselors** The total number of counselors in the 30 districts surveyed declined by 628 since before the Great Recession. Only one district—Fresno Unified—now has more counselors than it had before the beginning of the recession. Twelve districts reported having fewer counselors compared to the previous year, and 27 districts still have fewer counselors than they had at the start of the recession. The decline in Los

Angeles Unified was especially notable, decreasing from 884 counselors in 2007-08 to 626 in 2012-13. The ratio of counselors to students—about 1 counselor to 842 students—in the state's 30 largest districts remains far below the level that allows counselors to provide the personal attention many students need.

■ **Security Threats** The tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Conn., in December 2012 raised anxieties among students, parents, and teachers regarding school security, and put pressure on districts to reassess their safety plans. Twenty-seven of the 30 districts reviewed their safety plans, and 19 made changes to their plans. Thirteen increased security measures, from adding peepholes in classroom doors and installing camera systems to improving ID badge systems for employees and increasing visits of police officers and other law enforcement personnel.

■ **Childhood Poverty** Nearly all of the state's 30 largest school districts are enrolling more students living in poverty than before the Great Recession. In 2011, a higher proportion of students were living in poverty in 26 out of the state's 30 largest districts than in 2007-08, according to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. In 2007-08, 51% of California's public school students were poor enough to qualify for the federal free and reduced-price meals program. By 2011-12, that proportion had grown to 58%. From an educator's perspective, this is a cause for concern because of the high correlation between family income levels and academic achievement.

DEFINING SCHOOL STRESS

In this report, we describe the multiple challenges faced by school districts as “stress factors,” and show whether these stresses have increased, diminished, or stayed the same since 2011-12 and, in some areas, since 2007-08 before the recession began.

Our goal is to look at schools in a more multidimensional way than simply through the lens of how they are doing on test scores and other accountability measures.

We define a “stress factor” as any internal or external influence that makes it more difficult for a school or district to carry out its basic mission of providing a high quality education to all its students, as well as to ensure that its students succeed on state and federal accountability measures.

Each stress factor affects schools, districts, and children in different ways. The factors are not intended to be a statistical measure of how much “stress” a district is under.

However, the concept of a “stress factor” provides a convenient framework to organize the multiple ways schools have been affected by the state’s budget crisis, the pressures they face in the most economically distressed communities in the state, and the degree to which these pressures are easing in response to changes in the state and national economies.

In this report, we have identified 11 such stress factors.

- “Internal” stress factors include teacher layoffs, larger class sizes, fewer instructional days, fewer counselors, cutbacks in summer school, and security threats.
- “External” stress factors are declining enrollments, increasing childhood poverty, high unemployment, foreclosures, and health insurance coverage.

There are a number of other stress factors that we did not identify in this report. These might include whether a

district closed schools or experienced labor strife, increasing truancy rates, or the extent to which financial reserves have been depleted.

For a range of reasons, we did not review these factors in this report, but where appropriate will do so in future reports as a way to provide a comprehensive picture of the challenges facing the state’s largest school districts.

Also, we do not suggest that these stress factors are of equal severity, or that they have the same or similar impact on every school district.

School officials often say that the most stressful consequences of the state’s budget crisis have been teacher and staff layoffs, including the practice of issuing preliminary notices to certificated staff by the March 15 legal deadline, typically in far larger numbers than those eventually laid off permanently.

Layoffs, as well as the threat of being laid off, have a rippling effect across a school, and are felt by parents, children, and remaining staff. Some research indicates that they also have an impact on students’ academic achievement. Thus, the decline in layoffs and layoff notices described in this report is likely to have more of an impact on a school community than some of the other positive trends we have identified.

Other stress factors, such as increasing class sizes in the elementary grades, have a less, though still significant, impact, and will be felt only in certain classrooms or schools.



The decline in layoff notices, and in eventual permanent layoffs, represents a significant easing of the overall stress load that California schools have experienced in recent years.

NOTES

1 Not included in these numbers are temporary teachers, who are hired for a year or less. Districts can choose to not rehire temporary teachers without giving them pink slip warnings in March. No state statistics are available to indicate how many temporary teachers were laid off.

2 See also “Dramatic dip in ‘pink slips’ given to teachers” by Susan Frey and John Fensterwald, *EdSource Today*, March 14, 2013.

3 *Victims of the Churn*, The Education Trust-West, 2011.

4 *How Teacher Turnover Harms Student Achievement* by Matthew Ronfeldt, et al., National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2011.

STRESS FACTOR: TEACHER LAYOFFS

Survey Findings: Teacher layoffs decline dramatically

In a dramatic reversal of earlier trends, the number of teachers receiving layoff notices plummeted in 2012-13, relieving the overall stress load on school districts.

In spring 2013, California’s 30 largest districts issued only 848 preliminary layoff notices¹ by March 15, the deadline mandated by state law.² Nearly half (14 districts) issued no layoff notices at all—and only one, San Bernardino City Unified with 160 layoff notices—issued more than 100.

This represents a substantial reduction from just two years ago, when the 30 largest districts issued 10,854 pink slips. That meant one in 10 teachers in those districts received such a notice. In 2012-13, fewer than one in a 100 received one.

The decline in layoff notices in the largest districts is mirrored by similar reductions statewide. The California Teachers Association estimates that districts issued 3,000 preliminary layoff notices to teachers and certain other certificated staff by March 15.

“In general, the picture is really good,” said Dean Vogel, president of the California Teachers Association. “We’re taking a breath; we’re very happy about that.”

These reductions are in large part attributable to the funds generated by the passage of Proposition 30 in November 2012. Eighteen of the 30 largest districts credited Prop. 30 with allowing them to avert all or most layoffs.

At the same time, schools are managing with far fewer teachers than before the start of the Great Recession. According to Ed-Data, 26,525 fewer teachers were in California classrooms in 2011-12 than in 2007-08—about a 10% reduction. In most cases, these teachers have not been rehired.

Impact of Fewer Teacher Layoffs

The decline in layoff notices, and in eventual permanent layoffs, represents a significant easing of the overall stress load that California schools have experienced in recent years. Among the many stress factors identified in this report, teacher and other staff layoffs may have the greatest impact, which is why the reductions in this area are so significant.

Just the threat of layoffs can demoralize staff, with a rippling effect in classrooms and throughout a district.³ Thus, even when teachers are rehired, the issuing of layoff notices can inflict significant damage on the culture of a school.

Teacher turnover has an impact on student achievement, according to a compelling study in New York City,⁴ which concluded that “teacher turnover has a significant and negative effect on student achievement in both math and English language arts.” The study also found that teacher turnover is “particularly harmful” to students in schools with large populations of low-performing students.

TEACHER PRELIMINARY LAYOFF NOTICES

District	Number of Teachers, 2011-12 ¹	Preliminary Layoff Notices, Spring 2011	Preliminary Layoff Notices, Spring 2013
Anaheim Union High	1,277	10	0
Capistrano	2,144	0	0
Chino Valley	1,206	54	3
Clovis	1,679	0	0
Corona-Norco	2,209	0	0
Elk Grove	2,779	445	32 ²
Fontana	1,677	70	42
Fremont	1,492	0	0
Fresno	3,554	257	0
Garden Grove	1,946	0	2 ³
Kern Union High	1,662	6	38
Long Beach	3,464	683	0
Los Angeles	32,713	5,456	0
Montebello	1,249	0	0
Moreno Valley	1,537	184	27 ⁴
Mt. Diablo	1,630	95	85 ⁵
Oakland	2,652	438	33 ³
Poway	1,282	0	0
Riverside	1,702	455	20 ⁶
Sacramento City	2,119	408	96 ⁷
Saddleback Valley	1,236	66	0
San Bernardino City	2,538	257	160
San Diego	7,060	1,374	0
San Francisco	3,392	147	90
San Jose	1,675	0	0
San Juan	2,179	237	59
Santa Ana	2,494	0	0
Stockton	2,000	100	16
Sweetwater Union High	1,766	0	59 ⁸
Twin Rivers	1,511	112	74
Total	95,824	10,854 (11%)	848 (0.9%)

NOTES

1 Data from California Department of Education (DataQuest), 4/2013.

2 This represents 17.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers. Some teachers are working part time.

3 In Garden Grove Unified, both teachers were probationary teachers in their first or second year of teaching. In Oakland Unified, 11 teachers receiving layoff notices were probationary teachers and the rest were adult education teachers.

4 This represents 26.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers.

5 This represents 78.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers.

6 This represents 18.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers. Of those notices, 13 were to adult education teachers.

7 Another 12 teachers with child development credentials teaching in preschool programs were also given notices.

8 This represents about 40 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions primarily in career tech and adult education.

DATA: EDSource DISTRICT SURVEY FEBRUARY-APRIL 2013; SACRAMENTO CITY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION; CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DATAQUEST), 4/2013

EDSource 6/2013



STRESS FACTOR: LARGER CLASS SIZES

Survey Findings: K-3 class sizes continue to grow across the state

California's ambitious K-3 Class Size Reduction program, initiated in 1996 to bring kindergarten through 3rd grade class sizes down to one teacher for every 20 students, has continued to unravel across the state.

Eleven school districts indicated that they had larger classes in two or more K-3 grades in 2012-13 than in 2011-12. Twelve districts in 2012-13 had 30 or more students in all K-3 grades, and another three had 28 or more.

Notable bright spots were San Francisco Unified and San Diego Unified, which have managed to keep K-3 average class sizes below 23 students. Los Angeles Unified also has smaller class sizes than most districts—an average of 24 in K-3 grades. Just one district—Stockton Unified—reported having class sizes of 20 students, and that was only in kindergarten.

This is a dramatic change from 2008-09, when almost all K-3 classrooms in the state still had an average teacher-student ratio of 1 to 20. That began to change in 2009-10 after lawmakers, in an effort to give school districts more flexibility in how they spent shrinking state funds, relaxed the requirements imposed on districts to receive the state subsidy of more than \$1,000 per student for keeping class sizes to 20 students.

It is possible, however, that increases in K-3 class sizes will be reversed as a result of incentives contained in the Local Control Funding Formula approved by the Legislature in June 2013. Districts will receive an add-on of \$712 for each K-3 student if districts make progress toward bringing average class sizes down to 24 students during the next eight years, or if they set a different goal based on bargaining with local teachers' unions.

Impact of Larger Class Sizes

Research on the impact of increasing K-3 class sizes on student achievement has been mixed. "Because the pool of credible studies is small and the individual studies differ in the setting, method, grades, and magnitude of class size variation that is studied, conclusions have to be tentative," an extensive review in 2011 by the Brookings Institution¹ concluded.

The review did find that reductions of seven to ten fewer students per class can have a positive impact on student achievement, particularly for low-income students. An *Education Week* review² tended to support the Brookings report, adding that smaller class sizes do not necessarily translate into better learning.

What is clear is that California's smaller K-3 class sizes have been extremely popular among parents and teachers. Larger class sizes may make teaching in those grades less appealing and discourage some parents from enrolling their students in more crowded classrooms, thereby eroding popular support for public schools.

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NOTES

1 *Class Size: What Research Says and What it Means for State Policy*, Brookings Institution, May 2011.

2 "Class Size," *Education Week*, Updated July 1, 2011.

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 3RD GRADE CLASS SIZES, 2012–13

District	K	1	2	3
Capistrano	32	33	33	33
Chino Valley	31	30	31	31
Clovis	26.5	27.1	27.1	27.1
Corona-Norco	27	27	27	27
Elk Grove	24	24	24	24
Fontana	31	31	31	31
Fremont	30	30	30	30
Fresno	26	26	30	30
Garden Grove	27	26	26	28
Lodi	26	27	27	25
Long Beach	30	30	30	30
Los Angeles	24	24	24	24
Montebello	33	33	33	33
Moreno Valley	30	30	30	30
Mt. Diablo	32	31	31	31
Oakland ¹	27	30	30	30
Orange	27.4	28.2	28.8	29.8
Poway ²	26	26	26	26
Riverside	24	30	30	30
Sacramento City	28	28	28	28
Saddleback Valley	28.4	28.6	28.6	28.6
San Bernardino City	33	33	33	33
San Diego	22.2	22.2	22	22.1
San Francisco	22	22	22	22
San Jose	30	30	30	30
San Juan ³	31	31	31	31
Santa Ana	31	30	30	30
Stockton	20	32	32	32
Temecula Valley	29	29	29	29
Twin Rivers	25	28	28	28

NOTES

1 This represents the contract maximum, but typically class sizes are at the maximum, according to the Oakland Education Association.

2 The maximum size in Poway Unified for these grades is 28.

3 This represents the number specified in the bargaining agreement. San Juan Unified was unable to provide actual numbers at the time the survey was administered.

DATA: EDSOURCE DISTRICT SURVEY FEBRUARY-APRIL 2013;
OAKLAND EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

EDSOURCE 6/2013



With the passage of Prop. 30 in November 2012, further reductions in the instructional calendar have been averted, and several California districts have been able to restore lost instructional days.

STRESS FACTOR: INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

Survey Findings: More than half of the 30 largest districts have restored their instructional year to 180 days

In 2012, California school districts faced the possibility that they might have to cut their school year to as little as 163 days if Proposition 30 were rejected by voters and so-called “trigger cuts” went into effect.

This would have been in addition to reductions many school districts had made from the previous minimum level of 180 days to the current 175-day minimum enacted by the Legislature in 2009, which was intended to give school districts more flexibility to respond to deep budget cuts.

With the passage of Prop. 30 in November 2012, further reductions in the instructional calendar were averted, and eight of the 30 districts surveyed were able to restore lost instructional days. In 2012-13, 18 out of California’s 30 largest districts had a 180-day school year. Another two districts came within one day of the 180-day threshold. Districts such as Elk Grove Unified and Poway Unified were able to restore a full week to their instructional years.

But the picture is decidedly a mixed one. This past year, some districts have cut their instructional calendar. Capistrano Unified decreased its instructional year by a full week, and three other districts cut one or more days from their calendars.

Six of the state’s 30 largest districts still had a 175-day instructional year, a full week less than their previous level. That compares with nine districts in 2011-12.

Impact of Shorter School Year

No research has been conducted on the impact of fewer instructional days in California, but research from other states suggests that reductions of just a few days can make a difference in academic outcomes.

A Maryland study, for example, showed that “the pass rate for 3rd grade math and reading assessments fell by more than a half percent for each school day lost to an unscheduled closure.”¹ Other studies showed that adding 10 days of instruction led to more positive outcomes among 3rd graders than repeating a grade, having a better teacher, or reducing class sizes by four students.²

Depending on how many days are cut, less time in the classroom can make it more difficult to complete curriculum requirements. Because teachers may be under pressure to get through the required material, they may not be able to give students as much attention as they have in the past.

NOTES

1 “Time for school?” by David Marcotte & Benjamin Hansen, *Education Next*, Winter 2010.

2 “Unscheduled School Closings and Student Performance” by David Marcotte & Steven Hemelt, Institute for the Study of Labor, July 2007.

INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS

	District	Number of Instructional Days, 2011-12	Number of Instructional Days, 2012-13	Compared with Previous Year, 2011-12
	Anaheim Union High	179	179	
	Capistrano	179 ¹	175	
	Chino Valley	175	180	
	Clovis	180	180 ²	
	Corona-Norco	175	175	
	Elk Grove ³	175	180	
	Fontana	180	180	
	Fremont	180	180	
	Fresno	180	180	
	Garden Grove	176	177	
	Kern Union High	180	180	
	Long Beach	180	180	
	Los Angeles	180	180	
	Montebello	180	180	
	Moreno Valley	176	175	
	Mt. Diablo	180	180	
	Oakland	180	180	
	Poway	175	180	
	Riverside ⁴	176	180	
	Sacramento City ⁵	177	178	
	Saddleback Valley	175	178	
	San Bernardino City	175	175	
	San Diego	175	175	
	San Francisco	176	180	
	San Jose	180	180	
	San Juan	180	179	
	Santa Ana	180	180	
	Stockton	180	180	
	Sweetwater Union High	180	177	
	Twin Rivers	175	175	

NOTES

1 The school year was reduced by one day only because of a Southern California blackout.

2 Only 179 days for elementary students.

3 Elk Grove Unified has year-round schools. The days in the chart are for the schools under the traditional schedule.

4 181 days for middle school in 2012-13 and 177 days for middle school in 2011-12.

5 The district decreased the number of days from previous years but converted some minimum days to full days so the total minutes of instruction remained “relatively the same,” according to the district.

DATA: EDSOURCE DISTRICT SURVEY FEBRUARY–APRIL 2013;
SACRAMENTO CITY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

EDSOURCE 6/2013



The White House has made children's mental health a major focus.

NOTES

1 [The American School Counselor Association](#) recommends a 1 counselor to 250 students ratio.

2 See the article in the [Washington Post](#).

3 See for example, [Paving the road to college: How school counselors help students succeed](#) by Richard T. Lapan & Karen Harrington, Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation, University of Massachusetts: Amherst, 2008.

4 "The Impact of More Fully Implemented Guidance Programs on the School Experiences of High School Students: A Statewide Evaluation Study" by Richard T. Lapan, Norman C. Gysbers & Yongmin Sun, *Journal of Counseling & School Development*, vol. 75, pp. 292-302, 1997.

STRESS FACTOR: FEWER SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Survey Findings: Drastic shortage of counselors continues

The state's largest districts continue to suffer from a shortage of counselors, with 12 districts having fewer counselors in 2012-13 than in 2011-12.

Of California's 30 largest districts, 27 had fewer counselors in 2012-13 than they had prior to the recession—up from 23 in 2011-12. The decline in Los Angeles Unified was especially notable, decreasing from 884 counselors in 2007-08 to 626 in 2012-13. The total number of counselors in the 30 districts in 2012-13 reflects a 21% decline from pre-recession levels. Across all 30 districts, the ratio of counselors to students was 1 to 842, a better ratio than the state as a whole.

The most recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics shows California ranking last in 2010-11 in the number of counselors per student, with a ratio of 1 counselor to 1,016 students compared with 1 to 471 nationally.¹

Only one district—Fresno Unified—reported having more counselors in 2012-13 than before the Great Recession. However, few districts issued preliminary layoff notices to counselors in any significant numbers in 2012-13.

Impact of Fewer Counselors

In 2012-13, greater attention has been paid to the important role that school counselors can play in identifying students with mental health problems, providing them with counseling, and referring them to mental health providers if necessary.

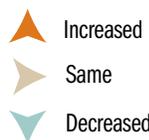
The White House has made children's mental health a major focus, and in response to the broader concerns raised by the Sandy Hook Elementary killings has sought funding for additional school counselors and other support staff to "help create a safe and nurturing school climate."²

Research studies³ also show that school counselors can make a significant difference in improving student academic outcomes. The most effective programs allow counselors to spend more time with students than on administrative duties.⁴ Some school districts are trying to make up for having fewer counselors by reducing the time the remaining counselors spend on paperwork.

But the overall thin ranks of school counselors means that most students will be hard pressed to get the personal attention they need, whether for academic or mental health reasons.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS

District	# of Counselors Prior to 2007-08 Recession	# of Counselors in 2011-12	# of Counselors in 2012-13	# of Counselors Now Compared with 2007-08	Preliminary Layoff Notices, March 2013
Anaheim Union High	71	67	67	▼	0
Capistrano	33 ¹	14.6 ²	16.4 ²	▼	0
Chino Valley	33	33	25	▼	0
Clovis ³	55	38	43	▼	0
Corona-Norco	72	60	62	▼	0
Elk Grove	91	73	73	▼	0
Fontana ⁴	69	50	62	▼	0
Fremont	38	23	23	▼	0
Fresno	65	73	75	▲	0
Garden Grove	53	40	38	▼	0
Kern Union High	105	98	102	▼	1
Long Beach	131.7	119.5	116	▼	0
Los Angeles	884	666	626	▼	0
Montebello	49 ¹	51	43	▼	0
Moreno Valley	83	56	57	▼	0
Mt. Diablo ⁵	0	0	0	▶	0
Oakland	34 ¹	20	21	▼	0
Poway	56	44	32	▼	0
Riverside	49	38.8	34	▼	2
Sacramento City	49.3	45.6	36	▼	0
Saddleback Valley ⁶	26	14	16	▼	0
San Bernardino City	124	127	113	▼	6 ⁷
San Diego	329	235	229	▼	0
San Francisco	151	152	138	▼	10
San Jose	53 ¹	37	37	▼	0
San Juan	64	47	46	▼	1
Santa Ana	68	60	62	▼	0
Stockton	69	53	63	▼	16
Sweetwater Union High	135	119	119	▼	5
Twin Rivers*	—	27.8	38	—	4
Totals	3,040	2,482.3	2,412.4	▼	45



NOTES

1 Data from the California Department of Education (CDE).

2 This represents the full-time equivalent number of counselors in Capistrano Unified. Because some counselors work part time, the total number of counselors in 2012-13 is 23.

3 Counselors in Clovis Unified are called guidance and learning directors. Totals include three part-time counselors in 2006-07 and 2012-13, and two part-time counselors in 2011-12.

4 Fontana Unified cut counselors' hours and renamed them "comprehensive student support providers" and "academic pathway advisers."

5 Mt. Diablo Unified has student services coordinators, who provide some of the counselor functions.

6 Totals for Saddleback Valley Unified include full-time and part-time counselors.

7 Although six counselors in San Bernardino City Unified received pink slips, the district says it does not intend to eliminate those positions. Teachers with more seniority who also have counseling credentials will fill the positions if the counselors are finally laid off.

*No data for 2007-08 because Twin Rivers only became a district in 2008-09.

Note: In 2007-08, depending on the response of the district, the figures may be from 2006-07 or 2007-08.



Cutbacks in summer programs mean that schools lose an important resource for students who are struggling academically and, in some cases, may be in danger of dropping out.

STRESS FACTOR: FEWER SUMMER CLASSES

Survey Findings: School summer classes for at-risk students are still threatened

Providing summer classes for academically at-risk students remains a major challenge for many school districts.

Although 16 out of the state's 30 largest districts reported that they would keep their programs in the summer of 2013 at last year's level, in most cases they had already drastically downsized them since the start of the recession. Los Angeles Unified is spending \$1 million on high school credit-recovery programs for about 7,000 students compared with \$42 million on students in every grade before the recession. Through grants, the district continues to offer recreation programs with an academic component for 26,500 elementary and middle school students.

Seven districts said they would have to cut their programs even further in 2013 compared to last summer. Another seven districts said they would make more classes available.

A significant change from summer 2011, in which all districts offered summer programs of some kind, is that two districts—Anaheim Union High and Long Beach Unified—plan to offer none this summer.

Some districts, such as San Francisco Unified and Mt. Diablo Unified, partner with city agencies to provide summer enrichment programs. Fresno Unified is relying on local college students who volunteer to work with students on math, science, and reading.¹ In addition, districts such as Sacramento City Unified, San Bernardino City Unified, and Santa Ana Unified benefit from funding from private sources, such as the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

Impact of Fewer Summer Programs

Cutbacks in summer programs mean that schools lose an important resource for students who are struggling academically and, in some cases, may be in danger of dropping out. The loss of summer programs places additional pressures on teachers to help their students make up for lost ground when they return to school in the fall.

Even students who are not struggling are at risk of losing considerable academic ground during the summer. A 2011 Rand Corporation report summarized research showing that “by the end of the summer, students on average perform one month behind where they left off in the spring.”² The report noted that low-income students are likely to lose even more ground, that these learning losses are cumulative, and that students may never overcome them.

It is therefore likely that a long summer break without any academic instruction contributes to the achievement gap.

NOTES

1 “Fresno, Central school districts praised for summer education efforts,” *Fresno Bee*, May 30, 2013.

2 *Making Summer Count*, RAND Corporation, June 2011.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Districts Offering Some Summer Programs in Summer 2012



District	Elementary	Middle	High	Plans for Summer 2013
Anaheim Union High	Not Applicable ¹	No	No	Same
Capistrano	No	No	Yes	More
Chino Valley	Yes	Yes	Yes	More
Clovis	Yes	Yes	Yes	Same
Corona-Norco	No	No	Yes	Same ²
Elk Grove	Yes	Yes	Yes	Less ³
Fontana	No	No	Yes	Same
Fremont	Yes	Yes	Yes	Same
Fresno	Yes	Yes	Yes	More
Garden Grove	Yes	Yes	Yes	Same
Kern Union High	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Yes	Same
Long Beach	No	No	Yes	Less ⁴
Los Angeles	Yes	Yes	Yes	Same
Montebello	No	No	Yes	Less
Moreno Valley	No	No	Yes	Same
Mt. Diablo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Same
Oakland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Same
Poway	No	No	Yes	Same
Riverside	Yes	Yes	Yes	More
Sacramento City	Yes	Yes	Yes	More
Saddleback Valley	No	No	Yes	Same
San Bernardino City	Yes	Yes	Yes	Less
San Diego	Yes	Yes	Yes	More
San Francisco	Yes	Yes	Yes	Same ⁵
San Jose	Yes	Yes	Yes	Same
San Juan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Less
Santa Ana	Yes	Yes	Yes	Less
Stockton	Yes	Yes	Yes	More
Sweetwater Union High	Not Applicable ¹	Yes	Yes	Same
Twin Rivers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Less

NOTES

1 Anaheim Union, Kern Union, and Sweetwater Union are high school districts. Kern Union serves grades 7-12.

2 Summer programs were not finalized in April when the survey was conducted. Corona-Norco Unified expects them to be the same as last year.

3 Elk Grove Unified expects smaller elementary and middle school program enrollment, but a larger high school enrollment.

4 Long Beach Unified will have no high school program this summer.

5 San Francisco Unified expects possibly slightly more enrollment than summer 2012 depending on whether grant funding comes through.

Note: Summer school programs for special education students that are required by law are not included in this summary. Programs that require students to pay fees, such as those offered through local community colleges or private entities, are also not included.



District administrators must balance the need to invest significant resources into creating more secure school environments against what is still a very unlikely threat—an attack even remotely resembling what occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary.

STRESS FACTOR: SECURITY THREATS

Survey Findings: Schools experienced renewed safety concerns and in many cases instituted new security measures

The deaths of 20 elementary school children and six of their teachers and administrators at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., in December 2012 forced school districts to take a hard look at their school safety procedures.

According to our survey, 27 of the 30 largest districts reviewed their safety plans after the killings, and 19 made changes to their plans. Thirteen added security measures of some kind. These included:

- Los Angeles Unified instituted a plan to have police officers and other law enforcement personnel visit every elementary school or middle school on a daily basis.
- Elk Grove Unified called in off-duty Sacramento County sheriff's deputies to increase their visibility at middle and elementary schools so existing school resource officers could focus their attention on high school campuses.
- Montebello Unified added resource officers at all of its high schools, installed camera systems at school facilities throughout the district, created online versions of their safety plans, and made hard copies to give to first responders in the event of an emergency.
- Corona-Norco Unified required all of its approximately 5,000 employees at 52 district locations to wear identification badges at all times.
- Fremont Unified added peepholes to classroom doors, while Santa Ana Unified instituted midyear safety checks at each of its school sites.

Impact of increased security threats

In the days and weeks following the Sandy Hook Elementary killings, school administrators had to take immediate steps to reassure students and parents that school facilities provided a reasonable level of security in the event of an unexpected catastrophic attack.

After the immediate crisis, districts already suffering from deep budget cuts and reduced financial reserves faced additional financial and organizational pressures to institute new safety measures. These can be expensive and beyond the means of financially strapped school districts.

District administrators must balance the need to invest significant resources into creating more secure school environments against what is still a very unlikely threat—an attack even remotely resembling what occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary. Many districts are still examining the security of their campuses in general and are trying to determine how to fund additional safety measures. Others like San Diego Unified and Corona-Norco are considering bond measures to finance increased security measures—such as for fencing on Corona-Norco campuses.

REVIEW OF SCHOOL SAFETY, 2012-13

District	Reviewed safety plan	Made changes in safety procedures
Anaheim Union High	Yes	No
Capistrano	Yes	Yes
Chino Valley	Yes	No ¹
Clovis	No	No
Corona-Norco	Yes	Yes
Elk Grove	Yes	Yes
Fontana	Yes	Yes
Fremont	Yes	Yes
Fresno	Yes	Yes
Garden Grove	Yes ²	No
Kern Union High	Yes	No
Long Beach	Yes	Yes
Los Angeles	Yes	Yes
Montebello	Yes	Yes
Moreno Valley	Yes	Yes
Mt. Diablo	Yes	Yes
Oakland	Yes	Yes ³
Poway	Yes	Yes
Riverside	No	No
Sacramento City	Yes	Yes
Saddleback Valley	Yes	Yes
San Bernardino City	Yes	Yes
San Diego	Yes	No ⁴
San Francisco	Yes	No
San Jose	Yes	No
San Juan	Yes	Yes
Santa Ana	Yes	Yes
Stockton	No	No ⁵
Sweetwater Union High	Yes	Yes
Twin Rivers	Yes	No

NOTES

1 Chino Valley added extra security personnel, but only on Dec. 14, 2012.

2 Garden Grove said its safety review and updating of its plans were not related to the Newtown shootings. Plans are always being reviewed and updated.

3 Oakland audited and reinforced crisis management protocols with its own police force.

4 San Diego will be making changes, but hadn't done them at the time of the survey.

5 By January, Stockton had reconfigured access to all its schools so there is only one main entry point. However, this was not in response to the Newtown shootings.

DATA: EdSource Survey February-April 2013

EdSource 6/2013



When enrollment declines significantly, districts almost certainly have to lay off teachers and other classroom personnel, with a potential rippling effect on morale and productivity throughout a school or district.

STRESS FACTOR: DECLINING ENROLLMENT

What the Data Show: Enrollments continue to decline in many districts

More than half of the districts surveyed by EdSource showed declines in student enrollment since the beginning of the Great Recession.

Declining enrollment typically places financial stresses on districts because schools receive funds from the state based on the number of students in attendance. Fewer students mean less revenue for schools even as overhead costs, such as building maintenance and electricity, remain fixed. Declining enrollment may also contribute to having to lay off staff, or even close schools.

Of the state's 30 largest school districts, 17 showed declining enrollment between 2007-08 and 2012-13. In Los Angeles Unified, enrollment dropped by nearly 40,000 students—a larger number than the total enrollment in most districts. Enrollments at both Mt. Diablo Unified and Saddleback Valley Unified dropped nearly 10%. Montebello Unified's enrollment declined by almost 9%, Chino Valley Unified's by 7%, and Long Beach Unified's by almost 7%.

In the past year alone, enrollment dropped by 500 students or more in 11 school districts (compared to enrollment increases of 500 or more in five districts).

On the other hand, some district enrollments have increased, which has helped those districts better manage the economic crises of the past five years. Between 2007-08 and 2012-13, Clovis Unified's student body rose more than 8%, and San Jose Unified's and Poway Unified's enrollments jumped by about 6%.

Statewide, between 2007-08 and 2012-13, enrollment declined by 1%, from 6,275,469 to 6,214,199 students. This statewide dip in enrollment, although slight, reflects a historic reversal of a two-decade trend, which began in the early 1980s, during which total K-12 school enrollment in California rose steadily. Enrollment peaked at 6,322,141 in 2004-05.

Impact of Declining Enrollment

When enrollment declines significantly, districts almost certainly have to lay off teachers and other classroom personnel, with a potential rippling effect on morale and productivity throughout a school or district.

Declining enrollment can lead to school closures, which typically are among the most stressful actions school administrators can take. Sacramento City Unified's school board voted to close seven elementary schools in spring 2013 in response to a \$5.6 million budget gap. Long Beach closed one K-8 school at the end of the school year, the seventh such school it has closed since 2008. Oakland Unified, whose regular public school enrollment has plummeted in part as a result of rising charter school enrollment, closed five elementary schools at the end of the 2012 school year.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

District	# of Students, 2007-08	# of Students 2011-12	# of Students 2012-13	% Change from 2007-08 to 2012-13
Los Angeles	693,680	662,140	655,455	-5.5%
San Diego	131,577	131,016	130,271	-1.0%
Long Beach	88,186	83,691	82,256	-6.7%
Fresno	76,460	74,235	73,689	-3.6%
Elk Grove	62,294	62,123	62,137	0%
Santa Ana	57,061	57,250	57,410	+0.6%
San Francisco	55,069	56,222	56,970	+3.5%
San Bernardino City	56,727	54,378	53,821	-5.1%
Capistrano	52,390	53,170	53,785	+2.7%
Corona-Norco	51,322	53,467	53,437	+4.1%
San Juan	47,400	47,245	47,752	+0.7%
Sacramento City	48,446	47,939	47,616	-1.7%
Garden Grove	48,669	47,999	47,599	-2.2%
Oakland	46,431	46,472	46,486	0%
Riverside	43,560	42,403	42,560	-2.3%
Sweetwater Union High	42,591	40,619	40,916	-3.9%
Fontana	41,959	40,592	40,374	-3.8%
Clovis	36,810	39,040	39,894	+8.4%
Stockton	38,408	38,810	38,435	0%
Kern Union High	37,341	37,505	37,070	-0.7%
Poway	33,283	34,569	35,196	+5.7%
Moreno Valley	37,126	35,690	34,924	-5.9%
Fremont	31,948	32,829	33,308	+4.3%
San Jose	31,230	33,306	33,184	+6.3%
Anaheim Union High	33,343	32,704	32,085	-3.8%
Mt. Diablo	35,355	33,987	32,001	-9.5%
Twin Rivers	30,927*	31,637	31,420	+1.6%
Chino Valley	33,047	31,315	30,705	-7.1%
Montebello	33,493	31,316	30,564	-8.7%
Saddleback Valley	33,558	30,885	30,355	-9.5%
Total	2,089,691	2,044,554	2,031,675	-2.8%

*This figure represents 2008-09 enrollment because Twin Rivers only became a district that year.



Rising levels of poverty are likely to intensify the need for a wide range of school services.

NOTES: The Census Bureau analyzed poverty rates within the boundaries of every school district in California. The figures represent poverty rates for 2011, the most recent year for which figures are available. The Census Bureau identifies poverty thresholds based on a family's size and age of the members. The definition of poverty in 2011 was \$22,811 or less in annual income for a family of four that includes two adults and two children. The level does not take into account California's higher cost of living.

In contrast, 2011-12 eligibility guidelines for the federal free and reduced-price meals program had a higher income threshold. Eligibility for free meals for children living in a household of four was \$29,055, while eligibility for reduced-price meals was \$41,348. Students who receive CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps) and are recipients of California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Program (CalWORKs) are automatically eligible for free meal benefits.

¹ *Prosperity Threatened: Perspectives on Childhood Poverty in California* by Rey Fuentes, et al., The Center for the Next Generation, January 2013.

STRESS FACTOR: CHILDHOOD POVERTY

What the Data Show: School districts are having to educate more children in poverty than before the recession

Nearly all of the state's 30 largest school districts are enrolling far more students who are living in poverty than before the Great Recession, based on data from both the American Community Survey and the federal free or reduced-price meals program. Because student academic achievement is highly correlated with the income levels of their families, high levels of poverty have direct implications for California's public schools.

District-level poverty data are not yet available for the 2012-13 school year, but the data that do exist suggest that the improving economy in California has yet to have any significant impact on reducing the numbers of low-income children attending its public schools.

In 2007-08, 51% of California's public school children were poor enough to qualify for the meals program. By 2011-12, that proportion had grown to 58%. In 2011, 26 of the state's 30 largest districts served communities with a higher proportion of young people 18 and under living in poverty than in the 2007-08 school year, according to the American Community Survey. In two of these districts, nearly half of the children were living in poverty in 2011—47% in Fresno Unified and 43% in Stockton Unified and San Bernadino City Unified. In addition, seven of the districts recorded double-digit increases in the proportion of children living in poverty since 2007-08.

This mirrors the rise in the number of children living below the federal poverty level in California—from 17% in 2007 to 23% in 2011, according to the Survey.

Impact of Rising Poverty on Schools

Rising levels of poverty are likely to intensify the need for a wide range of school services. Students may need more individual attention, including tutoring, counseling, and drop-out prevention programs. Poor attendance and higher drop-out rates could lower a district's average daily attendance, and thus potentially have an impact on its budget and its ability to provide the very services that its struggling students need.

“To put children on a pathway to college and successful careers, California must address the inequity in its current school financing mechanism,” a January 2013 report from the Center for the Next Generation concluded.¹ That is precisely what Gov. Jerry Brown's Local Control Funding Formula is intended to do. It will target more funds to school districts based on the number of low-income children enrolled in each of them, which should allow them to provide services they may not have been able to provide in the past.

CHILDREN LIVING AT OR BELOW FEDERAL POVERTY LINE

District	% of Children Under 18 Below Poverty Level in 2011	% Point Change (2007 to 2011)
Anaheim Union High	24%	+5
Capistrano	10%	+3
Chino Valley	14%	+11
Clovis	9%	-1
Corona-Norco	14%	+9
Elk Grove	22%	+6
Fontana	29%	+15
Fremont	8%	+4
Fresno	47%	+9
Garden Grove	24%	+12
Kern Union High	36%	+10
Long Beach	27%	+2
Los Angeles	33%	+6
Montebello	31%	+4
Moreno Valley	28%	+9
Mt. Diablo	21%	+7
Oakland	30%	+5
Poway	7%	+4
Riverside	23%	+4
Sacramento City	34%	+13
Saddleback Valley	5%	-1
San Bernardino City	43%	+16
San Diego	26%	+7
San Francisco	15%	+4
San Jose	14%	-1
San Juan	23%	+8
Santa Ana	30%	+3
Stockton	43%	+11
Sweetwater Union High	20%	+1
Twin Rivers*	39%	n/a
California	23%	+6

NOTES

Figures are estimates of poverty levels within each district's geographic boundaries. The year 2011 is the most recent year for which figures are available. All figures are rounded and change in percent was calculated based on rounded figures.

*Twin Rivers became a district only in 2008-09.

DATA: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU'S AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, 2007 AND 2011

EDSOURCE 6/2013

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR THE FEDERAL FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS PROGRAM

District	% of Students in Federal Meals Program, 2011-12	% Point Change (2007-08 to 2011-12)
Anaheim Union High	67% 	+16
Capistrano	24% 	+8
Chino Valley	40% 	+14
Clovis	34% 	+5
Corona-Norco	43% 	+3
Elk Grove	55% 	+9
Fontana	81% 	+15
Fremont	19% 	-1
Fresno	83% 	+3
Garden Grove	65% 	0
Kern Union High	50% 	0
Long Beach	70% 	+3
Los Angeles	77% 	+6
Montebello	76% 	-4
Moreno Valley	71% 	+6
Mt. Diablo	39% 	+5
Oakland	81% 	+12
Poway	14% 	+1
Riverside	65% 	+18
Sacramento City	71% 	+6
Saddleback Valley	25% 	+9
San Bernardino City	89% 	+8
San Diego	61% 	-2
San Francisco	63% 	+9
San Jose	46% 	+2
San Juan	42% 	+6
Santa Ana	78% 	-2
Stockton	85% 	+12
Sweetwater Union High	56% 	+13
Twin Rivers*	83% 	+11
California	58% 	+7

*Twin Rivers only became a district in 2008-09. The 11 percentage point change is the difference between 2008-09 and 2011-12.



STRESS FACTOR: HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT

What the Data Show: Unemployment has eased, but rates are still high in communities served by nearly half of California's largest school districts

Despite lower unemployment in California, communities served by many of the largest school districts are still coping with rates substantially above state and national levels. In addition, underemployment remains a challenge for many families. As a result, districts are having to help large numbers of children succeed academically despite whatever pressures—emotionally or economically—they may be experiencing at home or in their communities.

In April 2013, California's seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate was 8.5%. However, unemployment in the largest cities served by 14 of the largest districts was higher than the statewide average, in some cases significantly so. That reflects the fact that the state's largest school districts disproportionately serve low-income communities that have been especially hard-hit by the economic downturn.

The American Community Survey provides data on unemployment rates within a district's geographic boundaries through 2011. The survey shows that in 16 of the 30 largest districts, unemployment rates were higher than the state average. In 24 districts, those rates were in double digits, most notably 21% in San Bernardino City Unified, 20% in Fontana Unified, 17% in Moreno Valley Unified, and 16% in Sacramento City Unified.

Impact of High Unemployment

A study by Duke University researchers found that parental job losses cause declines in test scores, especially among low-income children.¹ In addition, UC Davis researchers found that parental job losses increase the probability that a child will be kept behind a year.² Russell Rumberger and others found that students are more likely to drop out if they have to change schools more frequently, which occurs when parents looking for work have to move.³

However, underscoring the uncertain state of research on this topic, Phillip Levine could not find any impact of parental unemployment on children's educational performance, based on standardized test results.⁴

But it seems likely that districts will have greater challenges helping children reach their full academic potential if they are from families struggling economically or dealing with other stresses precipitated by the loss of a job.

NOTES

1 "The Effects of Local Employment Losses on Children's Educational Achievement" by Elizabeth Ananat, et al. in *Whither Opportunity?* Russell Sage Foundation, 2011.

2 "Short-run Effects of Parental Job Loss on Children's Academic Achievement," by A. Huff Stevens and Jessamyn Schaller, National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper No. 15480, November 2009.

3 "The Educational Consequences of Mobility for California Students and Schools," by Russell W. Rumberger, et al., Policy Analysis for California Education, 1999.

4 "How Does Parental Unemployment Affect Children's Educational Performance?" by Phillip Levine. Prepared for the project, *Social Inequality and Educational Disadvantage*, organized by Greg Duncan and Richard Murnane, August 2009.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

District	Unemployment Rate in 2011, by School District ¹	Unemployment Rate in April 2013, by Primary City Served by a School District ²
Anaheim Union High	11.7%	7.3%
Capistrano	8.8%	5.0%
Chino Valley	12.0%	8.5%
Clovis	12.9%	7.2%
Corona-Norco	11.3%	7.0%
Elk Grove	14.2%	6.7%
Fontana	20.0%	10.0%
Fremont	7.6%	5.0%
Fresno	19.3%	12.6%
Garden Grove	12.3%	7.1%
Kern Union High	14.6%	12.1% ³
Long Beach	13.1%	10.2%
Los Angeles	12.9%	10.3%
Montebello	11.5%	10.4%
Moreno Valley	17.3%	11.1%
Mt. Diablo	12.5%	7.0% ³
Oakland	12.3%	10.8%
Poway	7.4%	4.1%
Riverside	13.7%	9.7%
Sacramento City	15.9%	9.8%
Saddleback Valley	7.7%	4.1%
San Bernardino City	20.9%	13.0%
San Diego	10.3%	7.0%
San Francisco	7.4%	5.4%
San Jose	10.6%	7.2%
San Juan	15.6%	8.3% ³
Santa Ana	9.8%	9.1%
Stockton	22.9%	15.7%
Sweetwater Union High	15.2%	8.1%
Twin Rivers	19.3%	13.1%
California	12.3%	8.5%

NOTES

1 The figures in this column are based on the American Community Survey (ACS), specifically table CBO3 "Selected Economic Characteristics." The ACS asks people if they are looking for work and available to take a job if offered one. The latest data are from 2011.

2 The figures in this column are based on unemployment rates for the primary city served by a school district as reported by the California Employment Development Department. These unemployment rates are based on the U.S. Census' Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS questionnaire probes to see if people are "actively" looking for work—such as interviewing and calling contacts—as opposed to "passively" looking for work (such as reviewing want ads). The CPS counts a person as unemployed only if they are actively seeking work. The rates reported here are not seasonally adjusted.

3 The figures for these districts are based on the unemployment rate for the county within district boundaries because there is no primary city.

DATA: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU'S AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, 2007 AND 2011

EDSOURCE 6/2013



STRESS FACTOR: HOUSING FORECLOSURES

What the Data Show: Foreclosures have eased, but the impact of the housing crisis still affects large numbers of children

During the past five years, California has experienced an unprecedented housing foreclosure crisis, placing extreme stresses on families, including renters, who have experienced both the threat of foreclosure or actual foreclosures on their homes or apartments.¹ School districts in communities caught in the foreclosure crisis have had to deal with its impact in multiple ways.

An estimated 1.1 million children—or 12% of all children—were affected by the crisis in California in 2011, based on an analysis of housing loans made from 2004 and 2008.² The total number of children affected by the crisis is likely to be even larger if an analysis of all loans, including those made before 2004 and after 2008, are taken into account.

In a positive sign, housing foreclosures declined dramatically between 2008 and 2012 in each of California's 30 largest school districts, according to a first-of-its-kind analysis by EdSource based on information provided by DataQuick. On average, the number of households affected by foreclosures declined by almost 60%. In seven school districts, foreclosures declined by more than 70%.

However, the crisis is far from over. Nearly 100,000 households were foreclosed on and nearly 150,000 households that were three months or more behind in their mortgage payments received notices of default in California in 2012 (down from nearly 330,000 and 235,000 in 2008, respectively). These are in addition to families who are still coping with the long-term economic and psychological effects of earlier foreclosures.

The Impact of Housing Foreclosures

Foreclosures contribute to higher rates of students having to change schools, according to two recent studies.³ Other research shows that changing schools is likely to depress performance on standardized tests and increase the prospects of a student dropping out.⁴

Some students may become homeless because of a foreclosure. Others may experience mental health and other challenges as a result, and schools must somehow cope with the fallout to ensure that students still succeed. This can place a greater strain on school district resources already stretched too thin.⁵

NOTES

1 An estimated 38% of foreclosures in California involved rental properties.

See "California Renters in the Foreclosure Crisis," Tenants Together, January 2011.

2 "The Ongoing Impact of Foreclosures on Children" by Julia Isaacs, First Focus and Brookings Institution, April 2012.

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FORECLOSURES AND NOTICES OF DEFAULTS

District	2008		2012		Percent Change	
	Notices of Defaults	Foreclosures	Notices of Defaults	Foreclosures	Notices of Defaults	Foreclosures
Anaheim	3,709	1,870	1,503	527	-59%	-72%
Capistrano	3,444	1,445	2,387	829	-31%	-43%
Chino Valley	432	924	1,217	438	182% ¹	-53%
Clovis	1,143	1,423	1,529	892	34%	-37%
Corona-Norco	3,524	4,144	2,630	1,138	-25%	-73%
Elk Grove	5,617	4,652	2,666	1,506	-53%	-68%
Fontana	2,617	3,352	1,933	879	-26%	-74%
Fremont	1,047	738	786	336	-25%	-54%
Fresno	3,014	3,011	2,599	1,663	-14%	-45%
Garden Grove	2,758	1,424	1,094	444	-60%	-69%
Kern	8,510	6,251	4,061	2,478	-52%	-60%
Long Beach	3,097	1,784	2,104	883	-32%	-51%
Los Angeles	22,252	13,511	16,277	6,271	-27%	-54%
Montebello	1,034	401	608	194	-41%	-52%
Moreno Valley	3,748	4,196	1,975	971	-47%	-77%
Mount Diablo	2,769	1,875	1,510	844	-45%	-55%
Oakland	3,720	2,604	1,972	1,035	-47%	-60%
Poway	1,377	777	1,097	413	-20%	-47%
Riverside	4,179	3,212	2,086	1,042	-50%	-68%
Sacramento City	4,450	3,519	2,177	1,344	-51%	-62%
Saddleback Valley	3,109	1,455	1,850	675	-40%	-54%
San Bernardino City	4,695	4,760	2,838	1,678	-40%	-65%
San Diego City	8,241	5,162	4,602	1,849	-44%	-64%
San Francisco	1,056	560	1,078	443	2%	-21%
San Jose	1,689	1,104	1,120	457	-34%	-59%
San Juan	3,766	2,548	2,494	1,613	-34%	-37%
Santa Ana	3,395	1,963	1,002	457	-70%	-77%
Stockton	4,193	4,256	1,784	1,169	-57%	-73%
Sweetwater	6,631	4,218	2,570	1,019	-61%	-76%
Twin Rivers	4,018	3,337	1,795	1,282	-55%	-62%
Total 30 Districts	123,234	90,476	73,344	34,769	-40%	-62%
California	329,257	235,896	143,496	96,188	-56%	-59%

NOTES

DataQuick provided data on notices of default (on properties where owners are at least three months behind in their mortgage payments) and foreclosures on single family homes from 2008 to 2012 for the 2010 census tracts within the boundaries of the state's 30 largest districts. Census tracts within each school district were provided to EdSource by the U.S. Census Bureau. Total number of notices of default and foreclosures for California were based on figures reported in DataQuick's quarterly reports [DQNews](#).

¹ Chino Valley differed from almost all other districts by registering a near tripling in the notices of default issued from 2008 to 2012. This appears to be the result of inaccurate data. The number of foreclosures in Chino Valley declined in a pattern similar to other districts and one would expect notices of default to decline in the same way.

DATA: BASED ON CALCULATIONS OF DATA RECEIVED FROM [DQNEWS.COM](#)

EdSource 6/2013



STRESS FACTOR: HEALTH COVERAGE FOR CHILDREN

What the Data Show: A greater percentage of children have health coverage in the state's largest school districts since the beginning of the Great Recession

Within the geographic boundaries of 19 of the state's 30 largest school districts, more children under the age of 18 had health coverage in 2011 than in 2008.¹ In four districts, the share of children without coverage remained unchanged, and in six districts the proportion increased.

Statewide, 92% of children had health coverage of some kind in 2011, a 3% increase from 2008.

These figures reflect a national trend: Despite the recession and its continuing economic impact on families, more children were receiving health coverage.² In California, nearly half got insurance through their parents' employers. Another nearly 40% received it through Medi-Cal.³ At the same time, California ranked 15th in the nation in the percentage of children insured. In overall numbers, more than 1 million children in California were still lacking health coverage.

Moreover, children served by 12 of the state's 30 largest districts lacked coverage at rates higher than the state average—in some cases far higher. The highest uninsurance rate—17%—was among children living within Fontana Unified's geographic boundaries.

NOTES

1 The latest data from the American Community Survey is from 2011.

2 [Nationwide, more children are covered by health insurance.](#)

Also see ["Health Coverage of Children,"](#) 0-18, 2011, The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

3 In 2012, California eliminated its S-CHIP program known as Healthy Families. [Children who were in Healthy Families are now covered under Medi-Cal.](#)

See report by the [California HealthCare Foundation](#) (specifically Appendix C).

4 See ["Healthy Steps Toward Student Achievement,"](#) The California Healthy Students Research Project, May 2011.

5 ["Top 10 Affordable Care Act Wins for Kids,"](#) First Focus Campaign for Children.

Impact of Greater Health Coverage on Children

The crucial link between health and academic success has received greater recognition in recent years. As the California Healthy Students Project noted, "the health and well-being of California's students have a direct impact on dropout rates, attendance, academic performance, and school revenues."⁴

Improved health coverage rates in California and nationally, however, obscure some deeper health challenges that have a direct impact on children's ability to succeed in school. Many children still lack access to care for basic childhood health challenges such as dental, vision, hearing, and mental health problems—all of which have been shown to contribute to high absenteeism rates. In addition, high-risk behaviors, such as drinking, smoking, drug use, and poor eating habits, especially among adolescents, remain a major challenge.

On a positive note, implementation of the Affordable Care Act should contribute to improved and more comprehensive coverage for larger numbers of children.⁵

HEALTH COVERAGE FOR CHILDREN

Percent of Children (Under 18) Uninsured

District	2008	2011	% Point Change
Anaheim Union High	14%	10%	-4
Capistrano	8%	6%	-2
Chino Valley	9%	8%	-1
Clovis	3%	6%	+3
Corona-Norco	9%	8%	-1
Elk Grove	5%	5%	0
Fontana	17%	17%	0
Fremont	2%	3%	+1
Fresno	11%	7%	-4
Garden Grove	11%	10%	-1
Kern Union High	10%	9%	-1
Long Beach	8%	8%	0
Los Angeles	14%	10%	-4
Montebello	23%	11%	-12
Moreno Valley	14%	13%	-1
Mount Diablo	5%	6%	+1
Oakland	9%	5%	-4
Poway	6%	4%	-2
Riverside	12%	9%	-3
Sacramento City	5%	3%	-2
Saddleback Valley	4%	6%	+2
San Bernardino City	13%	11%	-2
San Diego	12%	9%	-3
San Francisco	4%	4%	0
San Jose	6%	2%	-4
San Juan	3%	6%	+3
Santa Ana	17%	12%	-5
Stockton	6%	7%	+1
Sweetwater Union High	14%	9%	-5
Twin Rivers*	n/a	6%	n/a
California	10%	8%	-2

* Twin Rivers Unified only became a district in 2008-09. The American Community Survey had no health insurance data for Twin Rivers in 2008.

NOTES

The figures in this table are based on the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) of 2008 and 2011, specifically Table CP03 "Selected Economic Characteristics, 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates." The ACS asked all respondents if they were covered by one of seven types of public or private health insurance plans or "Any other type of health insurance or health coverage plan." Respondents who reported no coverage or whose only coverage was Indian Health service were considered uninsured.

California's 2011 statewide child health uninsured rate of 8% as reported by the ACS is lower than the 11% child uninsured rate reported by the California HealthCare Foundation in its November 2012 report, *Health Care Almanac: Covering Kids: Children's Health Insurance in California*. The latter statistic was based on the Current Population Survey (CPS), March 2011 Social and Economic Supplement. In the CPS, health insurance status was gauged in a similar manner. Estimates differ primarily because the ACS sample is 30 times larger than the CPS sample of 100,000 households per year. As such, income and poverty measures as reported by the ACS are considered more reliable measures of state-level trends than those reported by CPS, which is meant to provide information about the nation, regions, and to some extent, states. In contrast, the ACS estimates data points about the nation, states, congressional districts, metro areas, and school districts.

DATA: U. S. CENSUS BUREAU'S AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, 2008 AND 2011

EDSOURCE 6/2013



CONCLUSION

This report presents a portrait of a school system that is slowly beginning to recover from the damage inflicted by years of budget cutting as a result of a state fiscal crisis that lasted for nearly a decade.

But the impact of the crisis on schools has been exacerbated by decades of disinvestment in California's public schools beginning in 1978 with the passage of Proposition 13. Since then, California has fallen behind the national average in spending by nearly \$3,000 per student.¹

In 2010-11, the last year for which rankings are available, California ranked last in the nation in the ratio of students to certificated teachers, principals and assistant principals, librarians, and guidance counselors.²

Two notable events occurred during the 2012-13 school year that are moving California in a more positive direction and are helping to relieve some of the multiple stresses on the 30 largest school districts surveyed by EdSource.

The first occurred in November 2012, when California voters approved Proposition 30, championed by Gov. Jerry Brown, by a 55% to 45% margin. The initiative was intended to generate \$6 billion in additional tax revenues, about half of which would go directly to schools to effectively maintain their funding at their current levels. Passage of the Prop. 30 tax measure was especially notable because to many observers it marked a reversal of the tax revolt that began in 1978 with the passage of Proposition 13.

Barely six months later, the Legislature approved Gov. Brown's plan to fundamentally reform the state's school financing system through a three-tiered Local Control Funding Formula. It is based on the acknowledgment that it costs districts more to educate children with greater needs. The formula directs a uniform base amount to all districts, a "supplemental" grant of 20% of the base amount for each low-income student, English learner, or foster child in attendance, and a "concentration" grant of an additional 50% for some students in districts where 55% or more of their enrollments fall into those high-need categories.

By far the majority of the largest districts described in this report will get a substantial infusion of funds through both supplemental and concentration grants beginning in the 2013-14 school year.

The 55% threshold of high-needs students to qualify to receive concentration grants includes both low-income students and English learners. Even without English learners, 19 of the 30 largest districts have low-income student populations of 55% or more based on their share of students qualifying for a free or a reduced-price lunch. Eleven districts had low-income populations of 70% or more.

By focusing on what schools need to succeed, rather than allocating funds based on how well or badly their students do on tests, California is highlighting an often ignored dimension of the school reform equation.

NOTES

1 *A Decade of Disinvestment: California Education Nears Bottom*, California Budget Project, October 2011.

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2 National Center for Education Statistics, *Common Core of Data*, 2010-11.



California's Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999 and the 2002 federal No Child Left Behind Act focused almost exclusively on holding schools "accountable" based on the performance of their students on standardized, state-level tests. Relatively little attention was focused on what resources schools needed for children to perform at an optimal level not only on those tests, but also for the deeper learning that prepares them for college and careers.

As a result of its recent reforms, California has begun to emerge again as a national leader in contributing to the debate on what is needed for children to succeed. It is just a beginning. California still lags behind the rest of the nation in its investment in its public schools. Its reforms also don't address directly the issue of what investments in schools contribute most effectively—if at all—to improved student outcomes.

Yet, significant progress has been made in the single year since EdSource published its "[Schools Under Stress](#)" report in 2012. At least the process of recovery has begun. Now it is up to California to provide schools with the resources and incentives they need to ensure that all children succeed. [II](#)



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About EdSource

EdSource is an independent, impartial nonprofit organization established in 1977.

EdSource's mission is to engage Californians on key education challenges and to highlight strategies that promote student success.

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