

ACSA Leadership Report for July 17, 2026

From Dr. Edgar Zazueta, Executive Director

Please share this Leadership Report with your Regions, Charters, committees, councils, and members to help keep them informed about ACSA's priorities, initiatives, and recent activities.

Executive Director's notable activities & meetings

Gov. Newsom Education Governance Bill Signing: Attended Gov. Newsom's ceremonial signing of Assembly Bill 181, which reforms California's TK-12 education governance structure. I joined ACSA Past President Dr. Daryl Camp and state education leaders in recognizing the legislation's focus on alignment, accountability, and implementation across public education. [Click here](#) to view a photo from the press event.

2026 ACSA Board Retreat and Leadership Institute: Participated in ACSA's 2026 Board Retreat and Leadership Institute, held July 13–15 at the Omni La Costa Resort & Spa in Carlsbad. Led by ACSA President Dr. Rene Rickard, the retreat brought together the Fiscal Year 2026–27 Board of Directors and cabinet team for orientation, governance training, the July board meeting, and continued work on ACSA's strategic priorities.

Administration & Governance

Organizational Assessment Update

Following a competitive RFP and interview process that included ACSA Executive Board Members Dr. Roxane Fuentes and Dr. Leisa Winston, Edge Research has been identified as the preferred firm to conduct ACSA's organizational assessment based on its expertise, methodology, and alignment with ACSA's goals.

Staff is reviewing Edge Research's draft Statement of Work to confirm alignment on scope, deliverables, timeline, and cost before entering into a contract.

Once the review is complete, a board item will be brought forward requesting authorization to proceed with the contract.

For reference, attached are:

- The proposal submitted by [Edge Research Proposal for ACSA submitted 3 2 26.pdf](#).

- The original organizational assessment RFP issued by ACSA: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tr8_KsEqTRcjPwKml_JnkFRsUfDO9soC/view?usp=sharing
- A link to the Google Drive folder containing all proposals received and reviewed during the selection process: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1mJTkKz8edU9RNXEfgPj6nRUNAGiaTwLL?usp=sharing>

These materials are provided to give members access to the information that informed the recommendation.

ACSA staff believes Edge Research is well-positioned to help our association gather insights on organizational effectiveness, member value, engagement, governance alignment, and long-term sustainability. Additional scope and cost details will be included with the formal board action item.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Professional Learning Services

Academies

- ACSA Academy registration remains open until filled, including the AASA partnership for the Aspiring Superintendents Academy for Women Leaders.
- Recruitment is underway for the Transcendent Leader Institute fall cohort, which begins in October and serves aspiring and current superintendents. [More information can be found here.](#)

Conferences and Events

- [Here are the slides from the 07.15.26 Board meeting.](#)
- Please promote the Lead with Pride Summit, Sept. 30–Oct. 2. For more information, [click here](#).
- Registration is open for the 2026 ACSA Leadership Summit, November 4-7 in Chula Vista. This year's theme is "You belong HERE: Leadership for Every Student." For information and registration, [click here](#).
- Registration is open for the ACSA Leadership Summit pre-conference, "You Belong in Leadership: Cultivating California's Future Leaders." This one-day experience helps aspiring administrators and emerging leaders explore leadership pathways, connect with current administrators, and learn about roles beyond the classroom. Cost: \$100. For information and registration, [click here](#).

Credentialing and Coaching

- Dr. Tamerin Tooker was named to the CTC Workgroup to look at the administrative standards.
- ACSA has 78 confirmed Preliminary Credential candidates, its largest cohort to date. Enrollment continues through July 31, and two cohorts will be offered for the first time.
- 80 Clear Credential candidates have applied so far for Fall 2026-2028.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Innovative Learning

ACSA is accepting Requests for Proposals for the following learning topics. [Click here](#) for links. Proposal deadline: August 30.

- AI for School Administrators: Tools, Ethics and Practical Applications.
- Budget Literacy for Non-Business Administrators.
- CALPADS & Student Records Compliance for Administrators.
- Cybersecurity Awareness & Data Privacy for School Administrators.
- Data-Driven Decision Making for School Administrators.
- The Role of the Executive Assistant in School Administration.
- Instructional Coaching and Teacher Development for Site Leaders.
- Mental Health & Trauma-Informed Practices for School Leaders.
- Restorative Practices & PBIS: Building a Positive School Climate.
- Section 504 Training for School Administrators and Educational Leaders.
- Building the Student Schedule: Practical Foundations for Middle and High School Administrators.
- Year-End HR Compliance Checklist for Administrators.

Financial Services, Information Technology and Enterprise Data

- Work continues on a Finance, Technology and Data Roadmap for the next 12–24 months. Teams across the organization are being consulted to identify needs and prioritize projects.

- Development of the Fiscal Year 2026–27 budget is underway. The detailed budget, based on the approved framework, will be completed in the coming weeks.

Governmental Relations

ACSA Board takes positions on key November races and ballot measures

ACSA's Board of Directors has taken positions on four key statewide races and ballot measures that will be on the November ballot. On July 15, the board approved the following positions:

- Endorsing Xavier Becerra for governor.
- Endorsing Richard Barrera for state Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Supporting Proposition 3, the California Children's Education and Health Care Protection Act.
- Opposing Proposition 40, the Billionaire Tax Act.

Together, these decisions reflect ACSA's focus on supporting leaders committed to public education and protecting reliable, ongoing funding for California schools.

Xavier Becerra for Governor

The ACSA Board of Directors endorsed Becerra based on his record of advancing student health, civil rights and educational access. As California attorney general, he worked with education stakeholders, including ACSA, to implement protections for immigrant students and families. As U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, he supported expanded school-based health and mental health services and efforts to make Medicaid reimbursement easier for schools.

Richard Barrera for State Superintendent of Public Instruction

The board endorsed Barrera based on his extensive experience in local school governance and statewide education policy. Barrera has served on the San Diego Unified School Board since 2008, including as board president, and worked as a senior policy adviser at the California Department of Education. His experience gives him a grounded understanding of the fiscal, operational, and policy challenges facing California's public schools.

Support for Proposition 3

The board voted to support Proposition 3 to protect billions of dollars in ongoing revenue for California schools. Proposition 3 would make permanent existing voter-approved

income tax rates paid by California's highest earners. It would remove the expiration date from rates approved through Proposition 30 in 2012 and extended through Proposition 55 in 2016. The Legislative Analyst's Office estimates these rates generate \$5 billion to \$15 billion annually. Allowing these rates to expire would mean billions of dollars less each year for public schools.

Opposition to Proposition 40

The board voted to oppose Proposition 40 because it guarantees no funding for public schools and is projected to reduce ongoing state revenues that support education. The measure would impose a one-time 5 percent tax on California billionaires, directing 90 percent of proceeds to health care and up to 10 percent to education and food assistance. The measure was written to circumvent Proposition 98, meaning schools would not receive the roughly 40 percent share generally provided through California's constitutional education funding guarantee. The Legislative Analyst's Office also projects taxpayer responses to reduce ongoing state revenues by hundreds of millions of dollars or more annually and therefore lessen ongoing funding available for public schools.

Marketing and Communications

2027 Awards Program Update

The 2027 ACSA Awards Program nomination window opens August 1 and closes January 21, 2027. Nominations for all categories may be submitted through the online portal.

Beginning this year, the Ferd. J. Kiesel Distinguished Service Memorial Award and Marcus Foster Memorial Award for Administrator Excellence will be recognized at both the region and state levels. Regions will review nominations and advance one finalist in each category to the state committee, aligning the process with Administrators of the Year and other special awards.

The 2026 Awards Committee recommended the change in April, and the ACSA Board of Directors approved it for the 2027 program. The update will be announced in EdCal. The board also approved a new Early Education Administrator of the Year category in May.

ACSA membership is not required for the Kiesel award, allowing recognition of any individual with a sustained commitment to and impact on California education, including business executives, community leaders, legislators, and school board members.

ACSA House Advertising launch

On July 13, the Marketing and Communications Department launched a 2026–27 house advertising campaign in EdCal to spotlight ACSA benefits, services, and opportunities. The campaign is designed to demonstrate member value, deepen engagement, and connect audiences with key opportunities throughout the year.

Member Services

ACSA Member Assistance & Legal Support Team

2025–26 Year-End Data

Members Served: 965

Cases by Job-Alike	Count	Percentage
Site Administrators	379	39%
District Office	249	26%
Superintendents & Supt/Prin	204	21%
Assistant Superintendents	103	11%
Retired, Associate, Other	30	3%

Cases by Gender	Count	Percentage
Female	579	60%
Male	386	40%

Cases by Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
F-White, Not Hispanic	379	39%
E-Hispanic	149	15%
D-African American	55	6%
All Other Ethnicities Combined	44	5%
Decline to State	10	1%
Blank/Empty	328	34%

Cases by Generation	Count	Percentage
Silent Gen & Earlier (Before 1946)	0	0%
Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	51	5%
Gen X (1965-1980)	649	67%
Millennials (1981-1996)	134	14%
Gen Z (1997-2012)	1	0%
Unknown	130	14%

Cases by Issue/Concern	Count	Percentage
Reassignment/Demotion/Termination	133	14%
Contract Assistance	133	14%
Investigations/Administrative Leave	123	13%
General Legal	100	10%
Job Search Assistance (App/Resume/Parameters)	47	5%
Hostile Work Environment	47	5%
Salary/Benefits Assistance/Disputes	42	4%
Supt-Board/Admin-Board Relations	40	4%
Variety of other reasons	300	31%

Most Active Regions	Count	Percentage
6	82	9%
15	75	8%
11	71	7%

8	69	7%
17	65	7%

Cases by Advocate	Count	Percentage
Chris Downing	112	12%
Christina Torres-Peters (joined team Jan 2026)	73	8%
Gary Rutherford	125	13%
Janet Morey	131	14%
Joe Jones (plus strike preparation assistance)	110	11%
John Almond	155	16%
Ron Carruth	120	12%
Sharon Dezutti	107	11%
<i>Lloyd Wamhof (retired Jan 2026)</i>	32	3%

Legal Assistance Paid:

	Cases	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
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