

Executive Director's notable activities & meetings

ACSA Board of Directors leadership engagement:

Participated in new monthly check-ins introduced by ACSA President Dr. Rene Rickard to keep Board officers and the State Board of Directors connected between regular meetings.

Region 6 Leadership Retreat:

Attended the ACSA Region 6 Leadership Retreat on August 8 in Livermore to connect with region leaders, discuss priorities and strengthen alignment with state ACSA.

ACSA all-staff kickoff:

Joined ACSA employees for the August 11 all-staff kickoff in Sacramento to launch the fiscal year, strengthen cross-departmental collaboration and align around organizational priorities.

Superintendent evaluation collaboration with CSBA:

Met with California School Boards Association representatives on August 12 to explore opportunities for collaboration on superintendent evaluations and effective superintendent-board governance.

Meeting with California gubernatorial candidate Xavier Becerra:

Joined ACSA Executive Committee members and Senior Director of Governmental Relations Iván Carrillo on August 19 for a virtual meeting with California gubernatorial candidate Xavier Becerra to strengthen the relationship, share ACSA's education priorities and position ACSA as a future policy partner.

Executive Strategies and Priorities session:

Convened ACSA Cabinet members on August 26 to identify FY 2026–27 annual goals and align departmental priorities with ACSA's strategic direction.

California Administrators' Equity Alliance panel:

Participated in a California Administrators' Equity Alliance panel on August 28 at the California Latino School Boards Association Unity Conference in San Jose, highlighting equity-focused leadership and opportunities to improve outcomes for students and communities.

Administration & Governance

Organizational Assessment Update

ACSA staff met with Edge Research to refine the scope for ACSA's organizational assessment, which will examine how the association's structure, culture, systems and practices support its mission, strategic priorities and future readiness. The work includes internal stakeholder engagement, qualitative research with current, prospective and lapsed members, and a broader survey that will lead to actionable recommendations.

The project is expected to conclude this fall, with findings and recommendations presented to the ACSA Board of Directors. Staff will keep the Board updated as work progresses. To review the statement of work, [click here](#).

Statewide School Phone Policy Survey Update:

ACSA partnered with the California County Superintendents Association to encourage participation in the national "Phones in Focus" study led by Dr. Angela Duckworth, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania. Researchers examined school cell phone policies' impact on learning and school culture. In August, Dr. Duckworth's team shared preliminary California findings from 5,516 educators representing about 22% of California schools, including elementary, middle and high schools. To review the analysis and related documents, [click here](#).

The California findings are part of a national effort to develop a comprehensive picture of school cell phone policies and their perceived effects. Materials included California and national analyses, "positive outlier" schools, and district- and school-level briefing memos.

Dr. Duckworth and Dr. Ben Churchill, superintendent of Poway Unified School District, discussed the subject matter in a recent edition of the ACSA Legislative Lunch Break. To see the program, [click here](#).

Dr. Duckworth noted the analyses remain preliminary as researchers continue matching phone policy data with objective outcome measures. The findings are intended to help state and local leaders evaluate student phone use policies.

The work is timely as California continues implementing student phone policies and policy discussions continue statewide and locally. ACSA's participation ensured California educators were represented in the national conversation.

The research team also announced, "Screens in Schools," a follow-up project on classroom laptop and tablet use and student responses to phone policies.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Professional Learning Services

ACSA Academies:

Several ACSA Academies open September 11, including new offerings for Early Education, Special Education, Aspiring Superintendents and Superintendents. The New Superintendent Seminar Series and ACSA-AASA Aspiring Superintendents Academy for Women Leaders are expected to reach capacity, while the Transcendent Leader Institute is recruiting for its October cohort. For more information, [click here](#).

Conferences and Events:

The ACSA Women in School Leadership Forum and Personnel Institute conferences are over capacity and will close with wait lists. Leadership Summit registration is at 70% of goal, with support needed for the \$100 aspiring administrators pre-conference. For more information, [click here](#). The ACSA Lead with Pride Summit has moved to March 2027 due to low registration.

Credentialing and Coaching:

The ACSA Preliminary Credential Leadership Institute launched August 15 with our largest cohort: 103 aspiring leaders, including seven interns. For Fall 2026–28, 170 Clear Credential candidates have applied. Precision Coaching has 15 applications and 75 openings; requests are filled on an ongoing basis. The team is preparing its CTC program review submission due in October.

Affinity networks:

ACSA affinity networks have launched for the year. To learn how to get involved in the five networks, [click here](#).

Critically Conscious Classroom:

New Critically Conscious Classroom episodes are available, with upcoming guests Dr. Shawn Ginwright, Jay Artis-Wright and Jose Antonio Vargas. To watch, [click here](#). The CCC Substack has also launched as an extension of the show and EdCal "Beyond Equity" column. To visit, [click here](#).

ACSA Transformative Educational Leader (ATEL) Framework:

The ATEL framework provides a research-based lens for professional learning and leader reflection. Monthly EdCal articles will unpack each element and connect to live webinars. The first article, on Critical Self-Reflection, publishes September 7, followed by a September 29 webinar.

Innovative Learning:

Congratulations to Anthony Robinson, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Innovative Learning Director, on his appointment to the governor's Technology Innovation Council. RFPs remain open for topics of interest to school leaders, and new asynchronous courses are in development, including a short course on ACSA's Strategic Plan. Grants and sponsorships are being explored to keep course fees minimal.

Financial Services, Information Technology and Enterprise Data

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 budget has been completed based on the framework approved by the ACSA Board of Directors in June. FY 2026 membership activity and FY 2027 renewal data have been analyzed and shared with regions through the reporting platform. Security and access hardware and software have been updated, and trainings have been held on region reporting, expense reporting, bank account access and general finance.

ACSA Region and Charter reporting is due August 31 and will support the most complete financial statements and reporting package ACSA has provided.

Human Resources

Wage and Hour audit and compensation review update:

At the all-staff meeting, ACSA Human Resources (HR) updated employees on the Wage and Hour audit, launched in January 2026, and the compensation review.

401(k) provider transition completed:

ACSA HR completed the transition of ACSA's 401(k) plan to T. Rowe Price.

Fiscal year kick-off and employee engagement:

ACSA HR supported the back-to-school themed all-staff kickoff and week-long Spirit Week, with daily dress-up themes that encouraged employee engagement.

Governmental Relations

Final legislative deadlines loom:

The Legislature is nearing the end of the 2025–26 session, with bills due to reach the governor by August 31. ACSA continues advocating for priority measures ahead of the September 30 signing deadline.

ACSA member action is needed on priority bills. Local perspectives can influence the governor's decision. Please use the links below to complete a short form that ACSA will submit as a letter on your behalf:

- AB 2490 (Valencia) [Signature Request](#) - ACSA-sponsored legislation that provides continuity for students by allowing substitutes to teach for up to 70 days in general and special education classrooms.
- SB 1067 (Weber Pierson) [Veto Request](#) - Requires the implementation of a statewide mathematics diagnostic assessment for students in kindergarten through grade 2 without providing additional funding or support for our students or educators.

ACSA Engagement with Xavier Becerra:

ACSA President Rene Rickard, Executive Board members, Executive Director Edgar Zazueta and Senior Director Iván Carrillo met with endorsed gubernatorial candidate Xavier Becerra to strengthen the relationship and discuss ACSA priorities, including full Proposition 98 funding, local control and flexibility, declining enrollment, and the new education commissioner position. Becerra asked detailed questions and was committed to keeping ACSA and school leaders involved throughout his administration.

Proposition 3:

Proposition 3 would maintain income tax rates for California's top 2% of taxpayers, preserving billions in state revenue and critical TK–12 funding.

ACSA contributed \$100,000 through its Political Action Committee and joined the campaign's core strategic group, giving the association a voice in high-level strategy. ACSA is developing member resources, including a sample school board resolution, and will identify additional opportunities to mobilize support for the measure.

Marketing and Communications

The Path to School Leadership:

ACSA Marketing and Communications staff partnered with ACSA Member Services and Credentialing and Coaching leaders to create a "How to Become a School Administrator in California" webpage that guides aspiring administrators and connects them to ACSA programs, credentialing support and professional learning.

The project positions ACSA as a trusted career-long partner, helps reach educators earlier in their leadership journey and supports long-term engagement. To see this new resource, [click here](#).

Member Services

Complimentary Student Membership Pilot:

ACSA Member Services launched a Complimentary Student Membership Pilot to grow ACSA's leadership pipeline by offering free student memberships to eligible credentialing and educational leadership preparation students who provide proof of enrollment.

The pilot also encourages regions to reinvigorate or establish student charters that support networking, professional learning and early engagement, with Member Services available to assist local efforts.

