California’s K-12 enrollment drops again, charter schools see increase

*New state data reveals latest trends*

MARCH 28, 2019 | THERESA HARRINGTON

California’s K-12 public schools this year experienced the biggest drop in enrollment in the past five years, according to new state data released Thursday.

While the number of students at traditional public schools has steadily declined, the number attending charter schools in the state continues to increase.

“This data provides a critical snapshot of all students in California, highlighting trends that show areas where students are improving, where they’re struggling and where additional resources are needed,” Tony Thurmond, state superintendent of public instruction, said Thursday.

A total of 34,135 fewer students were enrolled this school year compared to last, more than four times the drop experienced the prior year. Until this year, the biggest single-year decline in the past five years had been 8,783 from the 2014-15 to 2015-16 school year.

Significant trends over the last five years show an overall 0.8 percent decline in student enrollment statewide, from 6.2 million in 2014-15 to 6.19 million in 2018-19. Meanwhile, charter school enrollment grew from 544,980 students to 652,933 students during the same time period.

Research shows that by 2030, only 1 out of every 5 Californians will be a child, as a result of declining birth rates, said Samantha Tran, senior managing director for
This article details that exempting parents are very committed to their decision and largely impervious to a rule change, and will instead homeschool. Bill supporters misrepresented that ending exemptions will “raise” vaccination rates. The schools may measure higher, but mostly because exempting families will have left, and there will be very few new vaccinations.


**LOCAL NEWS**

New state vaccine law could cause enrollment problems

"There's a public perception out there that suddenly and magically, starting with this school year, everybody is going to be in vaccination compliance, and it's just not true," Rice said.

"People have moved out of the state as a result of this; the whole notion of government mandating vaccines, I think, created a turning point for some people," said Jeff Rice, founder and director of APLUS+, an association of personalized learning schools and resources.

But for others — particularly very small schools — even what would be a small drop in enrollment at other schools could pose a financial crisis.

"If ... they believe that the school is now forcing them, then it's likely that they will make a different choice rather than comply," he said. "I think there's a higher concentration of families who are ... more of the mind to say, regardless of what the government says, my principles tell me that I should have the choice, and therefore I'm going to make a choice based on principle rather than simply complying with the government says."

**Action Item**- Notify your Professional Association, State Senator & Representatives:

We don’t need this bill, and don’t let Medical Trade Groups set education policy.
Oppose legislation that restricts or eliminates non-medical vaccine exemptions

Vacaville school district is setting up a parallel education system for those that do not wish to comply to 16/16 injections or 17/17 injections, attempting to avoid litigation and to keep the FTE funding within their district. [http://www.dailyrepublic.com/news/vacaville/vacaville-schools-provide-learning-options-for-children-not-vaccinated/](http://www.dailyrepublic.com/news/vacaville/vacaville-schools-provide-learning-options-for-children-not-vaccinated/)

CA SB 277 Pushes students out of schools and hurts districts.
This article describes administrator angst at now being the “vaccination police”, a small district potentially losing $215,000 in funding, a family electing for a spouse to stop working to homeschool, and school districts trying to meet IEP student requirements.

“Prepare for Impact

A new vaccination law has school administrators caught between a needle and a hard place

BY THADEUS GREENSON

It’s not difficult to understand why administrators would be on edge given what’s at stake. In California, school funding is tightly tied to enrollment and attendance. That means parents’ deciding that homeschooling their children is preferable to vaccinating them has a direct impact on school budgets and, consequently, staffing...

Consider the case of Coastal Grove Charter School in Arcata, a Waldorf inspired school that serves about 230 students in kindergarten through eighth grade... 19 Kindergartners and nine 7th graders had PBE’s... if those numbers carried over to this year, the school would have to turn away 28 students, or about 12 percent of its student body...

Going back to Coastal Grove, if the school were to see those 28 students vanish from its rolls this year, that would represent a funding reduction of more than $215,000...

Of course, the hope with the new law is that parents will opt to vaccinate their children and send them to school. But there’s a lot of uncertainty, in Humboldt County, anyway, as to whether that will happen. Some families clearly are not going to do it. Take Tenae LaPorte, who has quit her job in a local dermatologist’s office to homeschool her children. She had planned on sending them to Fieldbrook Elementary but is dead set against vaccinating them. "We can do this," LaPorte said of homeschooling and shifting her family from a two- to a one-income household, "because it’s currently our only option we are willing to take."

Sitting in her office at the Humboldt County Office of Education, Special Education Director Tess Ives said there’s one other large issue looming with the new vaccination law: What to do with the thousands of kids in Humboldt County who receive some sort of special education through what’s called an individualized education plan, or an IEP. Under the law, districts and the county are responsible for providing the specialized services these kids need to get an education, a huge spectrum of offerings that range from special day classes to a bit of extra instruction or therapy. Even though schools might not be able to admit unvaccinated children under S.B. 277, that doesn’t alleviate their special education obligations.

"It’s easy to understand the controversy. After all, the bill mandated a medical treatment for children that some fear has adverse health impacts, with state lawmakers essentially telling parents: We’re putting public health before your concerns for your immediate family.”