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Legi Update, August 5, 2003

Governor Davis Signs Budget

At 3:30 pm on Tuesday, the Assembly finally passed the state budget bill on a vote of 56 to 22 and sent it to the Governor for final action. The legislative session, which started at 12:00 noon on Monday, was the longest legislative day in California history. The Governor signed the budget on Saturday, August 2, 2003. **The actual budget is AB 1765.** A [summary of the bill](#) can be downloaded in PDF format.

For those who would like to look at the actual budget (AB 1765), it can be found on the [Senate's web page](#) by clicking on "Legislation" and then entering the bill number (AB 1765)

Additionally, the [Department of Finance web page](#) has a complete summary of the budget. Click on "California Budget" and then click on "Veto Message Package" for 2003-2004.

The final agreements between the two parties that allowed the budget to be passed does not change the agreement on school funding that was set out in the Governor's May Revise and was approved by the Budget Conference Committee in late May.

The school library line-item in the budget remains intact. **CSLA members should feel good about the success they have had in keeping the program in place during such a difficult budget year.** Additionally, the **program is funded with a total of \$8.67 million** that will be distributed during the 2003-04 fiscal year on a per student basis. This is a reduction of \$15 million from the January Budget.

The final Budget does allow districts to use ending fund balances for categorical restricted reserves (including the School Library Fund) to be used for General Fund purposes as they were during this current year under the provisions of SB 18x.

This budget agreement establishes a program to pay off more than \$10 billion in prior year debt over five years and also acknowledges that there is a \$ 7 billion shortfall in the 2004-05 fiscal year. This will make balancing next year's budget even more difficult than it was this year. The

Proposition 98 Guarantee is at a minimum, so any large reduction next year could require a suspension of Prop 98.

Now is a good time to begin another round of communications with your legislators. Thank them for approving a budget that kept most K-12 programs intact and that provided reasonable funding for school libraries. Also, let them know how important it is to continue that school library funding to provide the needed continuity for school literacy programs. We need to begin build our alliances for next year's budget fight.

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