

# Navigating the School System



A quick guide for parents/guardians to understand schools, school districts, the California TK-12 system, and become involved in your student's education.



# Colusa County Office of Education

## Mission

The County Office of Education is committed to assisting the local school districts through direct and indirect services. The County Office of Education provides a variety of services, including fiscal management, curriculum coordination, special schools and programs, health services, and coordination of state and federal projects.



The County Superintendent of Schools is an elected official who administers the operation of the County Office of Education. Constitutional law designates an intermediate unit - the County Office of Education - between the California Department of Education and the school districts in the County to assure the most efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

By law, every child in California is assured of a quality education. Local school districts are responsible for providing K-12 education specific to the laws and regulations established by the California legislature and the California Department of Education.

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The County Superintendent serves as a facilitator in activities between other governmental and service agencies. Resources of neighboring counties are coordinated in an effort to expand all available services.

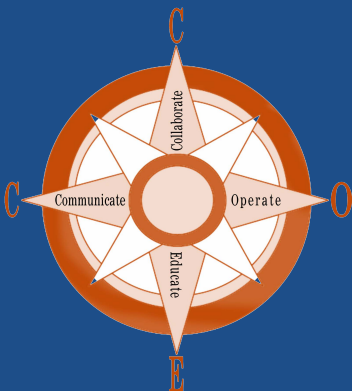
The Superintendent works with federal and state legislators to assure maximum funding to provide additional service dollars for the children in Colusa County.

As executive officer and ex-officio secretary to the Board of Education, the County Superintendent of Schools administers all policy set by the County Board of Education.



## The Role of a County Superintendent of Schools

*Michael P. West*

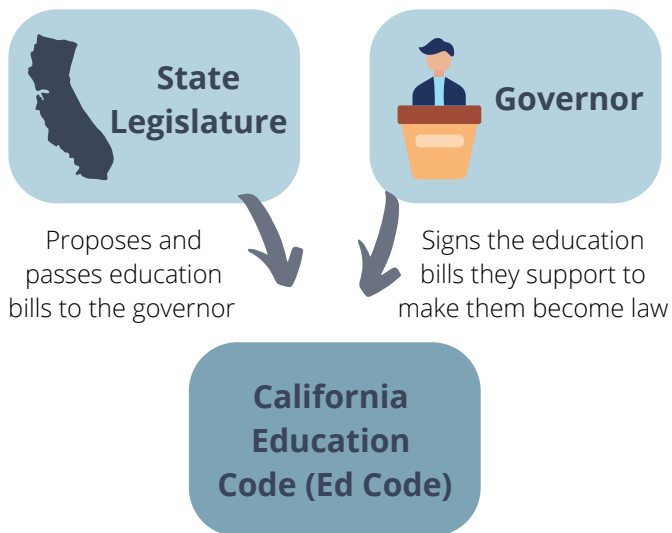




# How are the California Public School rules established and implemented?

## Who creates the California laws and codes that public schools must follow?

States must comply with federal rules to be eligible for federal funding.



## Who establishes health related requirements for schools?



The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has the responsibility of protecting the health of the public. The CDPH has the legal authority to issue orders that carry the full weight and effect of the law. This includes establishing immunization requirements, closing schools, requiring masks and quarantine.



Local Health Departments follow guidelines and orders set by the California Department of Public Health. They communicate these orders and guidelines to public schools.

## Who implements the Education Code and health related requirements?

- State Board of Education
- Local Education Agencies
  - School Districts
  - Charter Schools

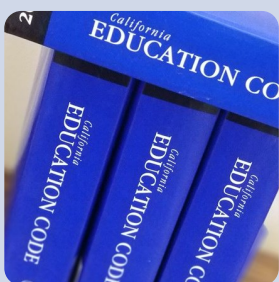
## Where can I read the Education Code?

The California Education Code can be purchased as a hardcopy, or can be accessed digitally at no cost at <https://tinyurl.com/caeducationcode>.

*\*Charter Schools are not required to follow all sections of the Ed Code.*

## What is the California Education Code?

The California Education Code (Ed Code) is a collection of laws which relate to all CA TK-12 public schools. The Ed Code and relevant sections are created and changed by the governor and state Legislature when they enact laws. County offices of education and local school boards are responsible for abiding by these provisions. In addition, the Ed Code is permissive, allowing school districts to take action on anything that is not specifically prohibited or in conflict with the Ed Code. Additional regulations that affect education are found in the California Administrative Code, Titles 5 and 8, the Government Code, and general statutes.



# How is the California school system organized?

An appointed State Board of Education sets key policy. A Department of Education, under the direction of an elected Superintendent of Public Instruction, executes state educational policies.



## California Department of Education (CDE)

The California Department of Education (CDE) is an agency within the Government of California that oversees public education. The CDE oversees funding and testing, and holds local educational agencies accountable for student achievement. It provides leadership, assistance, oversight, and resources (via teaching and teaching material) so that every public school student in California has access to a good education.

## California Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI)

The California Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is elected to four-year terms in nonpartisan elections. The SPI directs all functions of the CDE, executes policies set by the California State Board of Education and is responsible for enforcing education law. The superintendent serves as the state's chief spokesperson for public schools, provides education policy and direction to local school districts, and also serves as an ex officio member of governing boards of the state's higher education system.

## California State Board of Education (SBE)

The California State Board of Education (SBE) is the governing and policy-making body for academic standards, curriculum, instructional materials, assessments, and accountability. It has eleven members, including one student member, all appointed by the Governor of California. The SBE reviews and adopts instructional materials, determines California state frameworks and content standards, adopts regulations to implement legislation, and has authority to grant waivers of the Education Code. To the right, you can find the various opportunities community members have to learn about and provide input into the decision-making process for the variety of decisions made by the SBE.

## Ways to Learn about and Participate in State Board Decisions

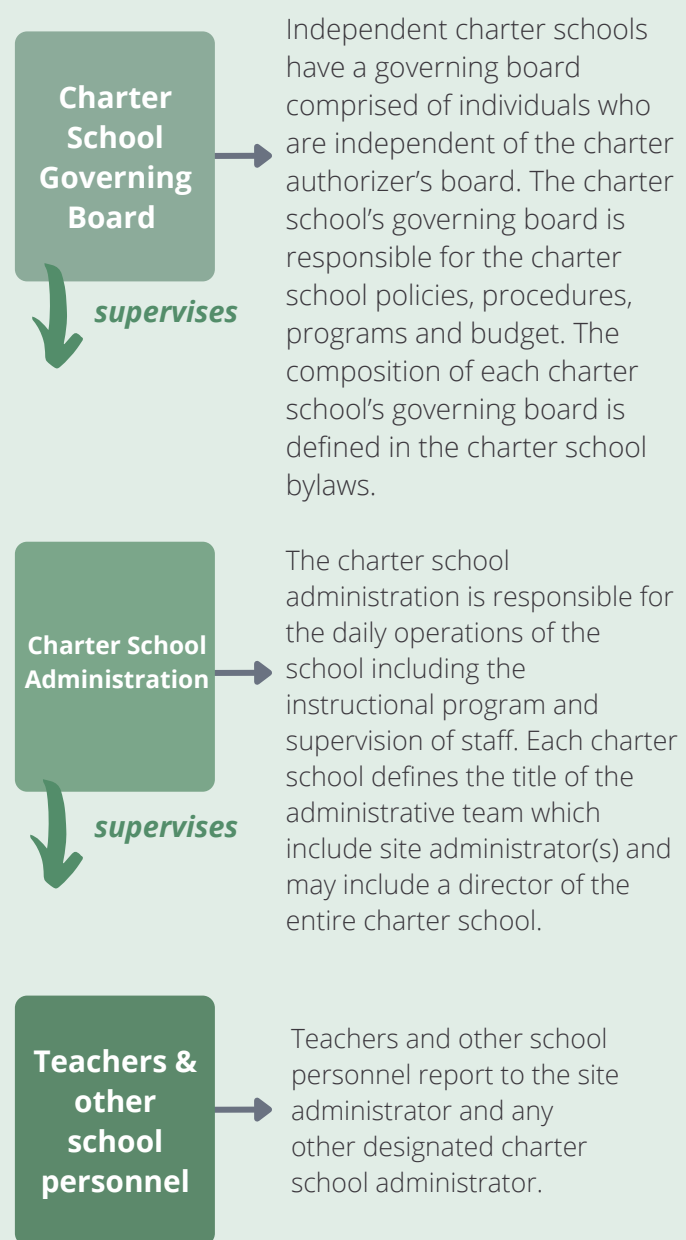
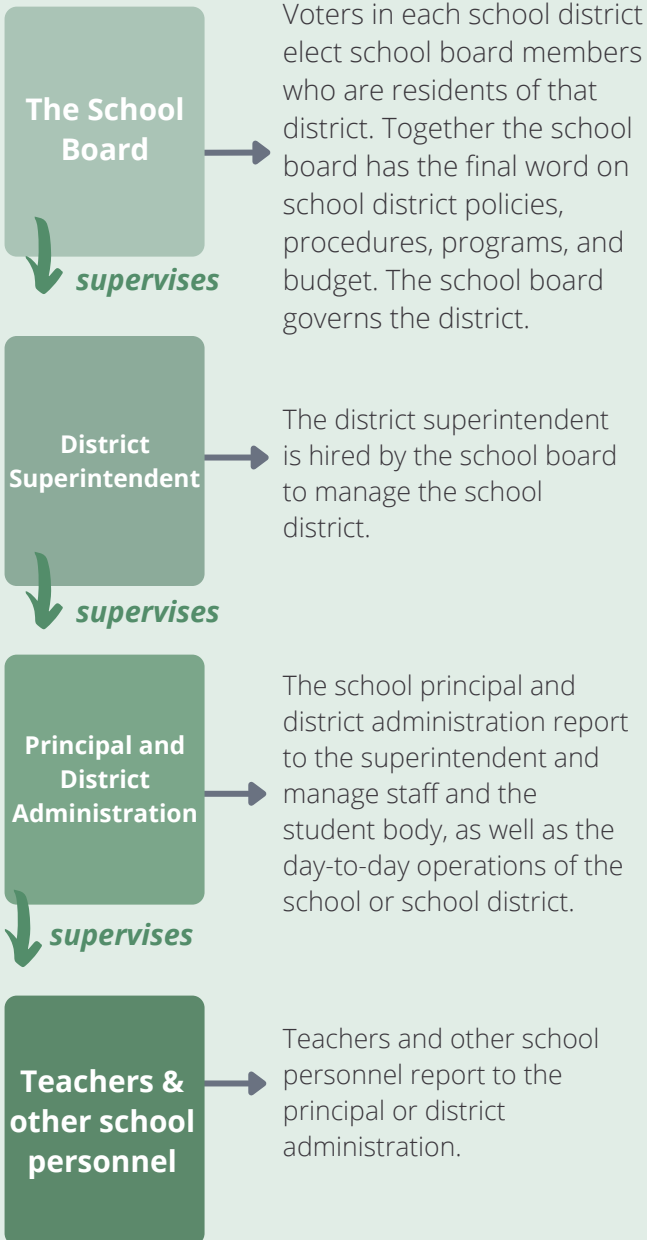
- ✓ Join the SBE mailing list by emailing a blank message to [join-sbe-full-agenda-subscribers@mlist.cde.ca.gov](mailto:join-sbe-full-agenda-subscribers@mlist.cde.ca.gov)
- ✓ Attend a SBE meeting virtually or in person to provide feedback on agenda items. A list of meeting dates and agendas can be found at [cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/index.asp](http://cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/index.asp)
- ✓ Learn about new frameworks, standards and curriculum updates, and attend or apply to join the Instructional Quality Commission. Application, meeting dates, agendas and other materials can be found at [cde.ca.gov/be/cc/cd/](http://cde.ca.gov/be/cc/cd/)

# How are school districts and charter schools organized?

California's TK-12 schools are run by independent districts called local education agencies or school districts. Districts can include just one school or many schools. California's Charter Schools are organized dependently, or independently, of a school district or county office of education. Charter schools can be just one school or multiple schools under a Charter Management Organization. Unlike district schools, character schools are authorized by either a district or a county office of education and must be academically successful and fiscally solvent or they may be at risk of non-renewal or revocation.

## School Districts

## Independent Charter Schools



# What is the role of the County Office of Education and the County Board of Education?



The County Office of Education (COE) is a vital component of the public education system. The COE serves as a critical link between the county's schools and both state and federal governments, and provides indispensable and cost-effective services to local schools and districts.

## County Board

The Colusa County Board of Education members are elected by voters in five geographic areas and serve four-year terms, ensuring that all areas of the county are represented.

### **Duties include:**

- Budget approval
- Policy Development
- Grant approval for state & federal projects
- Inter-district attendance appeals
- District expulsion appeals
- Instructional materials adoption for County Office schools

The Board acts as the County Committee for School District Organization and is responsible for reviewing and recommending proposals for school district unification, boundary changes and transfer of territory.

## County Superintendent of Schools

The Colusa County Superintendent of Schools is elected by the voters of the county and serves a four-year term. The County Superintendent of Schools must have prior teaching experience and possess an administrative credential.

### **The County Superintendent's major statutory responsibility is to provide fiscal and academic oversight. This includes:**

- Serving as a facilitator in activities between other governmental and service agencies
- Coordinating resources with neighboring counties in an effort to expand all available services
- Working with federal and state legislators to assure maximum funding to provide additional service dollars for the children in Colusa County
- Administering all policy set by the County Board of Education



The county superintendent does not have the authority or jurisdiction over the day-to-day operations for school districts or charter schools; that is the role of the district superintendent or charter school administrator, and the district or charter school board.

# Learn More About Active Parent Engagement

As a parent, you are your child's first and best teacher. Studies have shown that students are more successful in school when their parents/guardians take an active role in their education. Being involved usually means helping with homework or communicating with your child's teacher, but your participation can go beyond the classroom. When you have a concern, suggestion or question regarding your child's education, it is helpful to understand how your child's class and school fit into the larger system of education.







## Become an Actively Engaged Participant in Your Student's Learning

- Volunteer in the classroom and/or on the school campus for daily activities, field trips, and school events, which take place throughout the year. Volunteers are needed during the school day, after school and on weekends.
- Attend Back to School Nights and Open House events.
- Attend Parent Teacher Conferences.
- Provide consistent support with homework and identify a specific place for homework to be done.
- Utilize two-way communication channels to voice questions or concerns and learn about what is happening in your child's classroom and school.
- Demonstrate a positive view of education at home. Communicate your values and attitudes regarding education and the hopes, dreams, and expectations you hold for your student.
- Stay in regular communication with teachers.
- Keep contact with school counselors and administration to make sure your child is taking the right classes and is on track to graduate.
- Read announcements, newsletters, and other school or parent communications. When you have a question, be sure to call the school to get your question answered.
- Check in with your child's school for other opportunities.



## Join or Participate in a School or District Committee



- **School Site Council (SSC)** is a group of teachers, parents, and administrators who work together to develop the School Plan for Student Achievement for programs funded through the consolidated application.
- **English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)** advises the principal and staff in the development of a site plan for English learners.
- **District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)** develops and reviews a district plan for programs and services for English learners.
- **Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).** The LCAP is a tool for local educational agencies to set goals, plan actions, and leverage resources to meet those goals to improve student outcomes. Parents are encouraged to participate in the development of the plan.
- **Parent Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Organization (PTA/PTO)** aims to enhance learning and enrich the lives of the students within the school.



## Be Active at School Board Meetings

*You can help set policies in your district by communicating your input to your board members.*

- Review the agenda. Agendas are made public in advance of the school board meeting. You will find the agenda on the school district website.
- Arrange to speak at a board meeting. Regular school board meetings usually include opportunities for public comment. Many boards provide a sign-up sheet near the entrance to the board room.
- Write or phone your school board representative to make your opinions known. All school board meetings are open to the public, except when there are topics such as a real estate transaction, personnel matter, pending litigation, contract negotiations, or a formal hearing. Those items are addressed in closed sessions.
- Run for a seat on a school board. Registered voters residing within the school district boundaries can run for a seat on the school board during an election.
- Join a charter school board. Contact the charter school administrator to learn how to apply to serve on a charter school board.



# Who do I contact with a question, concern, or compliment at the district level?

School districts and charter schools have developed communication protocols to promote direct, open and respectful interactions so that problems and concerns can be worked out quickly and efficiently while also providing an opportunity to share compliments. The communication protocol starts with the staff member closest to the situation, as that person will usually have the most information. At times, additional personnel are required to resolve specific situations. An example of appropriate communication channels for a variety of topics are listed here. Parents should check with their child's school administration to obtain the school district's communication channels.

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Academics (grades, class schedules, curriculum, classroom procedures)	Classroom/Subject Teacher	School Principal	District Administrator in Charge of Subject	District Superintendent
Student Behavior	Classroom/Subject Teacher	School Principal	District Administrator in Charge of Subject	District Superintendent
Athletics	Coach	Athletic Director	Principal	District Superintendent
Budget/Financial	School Principal	District Administrator in Charge of Finance	District Superintendent	Board of Education
Health Issues	Classroom/Subject Teacher	School Nurse/Health Aide	School Principal	District Administrator in Charge of Subject
Special Education	Classroom/Subject Teacher	School Principal	District Administrator in Charge of Subject	District Superintendent
Transportation	Bus Driver	School Principal	District Administrator in Charge of Subject	District Superintendent
Building Use	School Principal	District Administrator in Charge of facilities	District Superintendent	Board of Education
Facilities/Grounds	Head Custodian/Grounds	School Principal	District Administrator in Charge of Subject	District Superintendent
Nutrition Services	Classroom/Subject Teacher	Food Services Director/ School Nurse/Health Aide	District Administrator in Charge of Subject	District Superintendent
Extra-Curricular Activities	Activities Director	School Principal	District Administrator in Charge of Subject	District Superintendent
District Policies	School Principal	District Administrator in Charge of District Policies	District Superintendent	Board of Education

*Charter school families would follow this process to resolve concerns or complaints:  
Teacher or staff member, Director or Vice Principal, Charter School Administrator, Board of Directors, Chartering Authority.*

# What if I have ongoing questions or concerns?

The California TK-12 public education system is designed to have issues resolved at the level closest to the classroom. Thus, it is always best to work with the school district or charter school personnel prior to filing a complaint at the state level. If you have taken steps to resolve an issue at the site and charter school or district level, and the issue is still unresolved, you may have options to submit a complaint with the California Department of Education (CDE).

Please note: If you have a complaint, [contact your school or district first](#) following the governing board policies and procedures. The local governing board of a school district has ultimate authority over many areas. Some examples include:

- hiring and evaluation of staff
- student assignments
- student discipline
- facility conditions

The state can receive concerns regarding:

- Educator misconduct can be reported to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing at [www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-discipline](http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-discipline), in addition to submitted a complaint to the school, district, or county office of education.
- Special Education complaints can be submitted to the school and school district, or the Special Education Division Complaint Support Unit for their complaint process at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/qa/cmplntproc.asp>.
- Student discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying complaints should be submitted to the school district or the CDE Resolution of Discrimination/Harassment Complaint webpage at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cp/>.



## ***What if I don't get a response or decision, or what if I don't like the response or decision I receive?***

Refer back to the governing board policies and procedures of the school district or charter school for guidance. School districts are required to provide copies of these policies free of charge. Many post these documents on their website.

For violation of specific state or federal laws and regulations that fall within the Uniform Complaint Procedures, you may appeal the decision to the California Department of Education.



# School Directory for Colusa County

**Arbuckle Alternative High School**

966 Wildwood Road, Arbuckle, CA 95912  
530.476.2173  
pierce.k12.ca.us

**Arbuckle Children's Center**

940 Wildwood Road, Arbuckle, CA 95912  
530.476.2115  
ccoe.net

**Arbuckle Early Care & Education Center**

620 Gail Avenue, Arbuckle, CA 95912  
530.476.2866  
ccoe.net

**Arbuckle Elementary School**

701 Hall Street, Arbuckle, CA 95912  
530.476.2522  
pierce.k12.ca.us

**Coastal Buttes Academy**

499 Margurite Street, Williams, CA 95987  
530.473.1350  
ccoe.net

**Colusa Alternative High School**

901 Colus Avenue, Colusa, CA 95932  
530.458.2156  
colusa.k12.ca.us

**Colusa Alternative Home School**

745 10th Street, Colusa, CA 95932  
530.458.7791  
colusa.k12.ca.us

**Colusa Children's Center**

705 6th Street, Colusa, CA 95932  
530.458.2823  
ccoe.net

**Colusa Head Start**

728 5th Street, Colusa, CA 95932  
530.458.0340  
ccoe.net

**Colusa High School**

901 Colus Avenue, Colusa, CA 95932  
530.458.2156  
colusa.k12.ca.us

**Colusa Preschool Learning Center A**

723 6th Street, Colusa, CA 95932  
530.458.4458  
ccoe.net

**Colusa Preschool Learning Center B**

723 6th Street, Colusa, CA 95932  
530.458.4458  
ccoe.net

**Colusa Unified School District Office**

745 10th Street, Colusa, CA 95932  
530.458.7791  
colusa.k12.ca.us

**George T. Egling Middle School**

813 Webster Street, Colusa, CA 95932  
530.458.7631  
colusa.k12.ca.us

**Grand Island Elementary School**

551 Leven Street, Grimes, CA 95950  
530.437.2416  
pierce.k12.ca.us

**James M. Burchfield Primary School**

400 Fremont Street, Colusa, CA 95932  
530.458.5853  
colusa.k12.ca.us

**Lloyd G. Johnson Junior High School**

938 Wildwood Road, Arbuckle, CA 95912  
530.476.3261  
pierce.k12.ca.us

**Maxwell Elementary School**

146 North Street, Maxwell, CA 95955  
530.438.2401  
maxwell.k12.ca.us

**Maxwell Middle School**

146 North Street, Maxwell, CA 95955  
530.438.2401  
maxwell.k12.ca.us

**Maxwell High School**

515 Oak Street, Maxwell, CA 95955  
530.438.2291  
maxwell.k12.ca.us

**Maxwell Unified School District Office**

515 Oak Street, Maxwell, CA 95955  
530.438.2052  
maxwell.k12.ca.us

**Mid-Valley High School**

1105 D Street, Williams, CA 95987  
530.473.5369  
williams.k12.ca.us

**Pierce High School**

960 Wildwood Road, Arbuckle, CA 95912  
530.476.2277  
pierce.k12.ca.us

**Pierce Joint Unified School District Office**

540-A 6th Street, Arbuckle, CA 95912  
530.476.2892  
pierce.k12.ca.us

**S. William Abel Academy**

499 Margurite Street, Williams, CA 95987  
530.473.1350  
ccoe.net

**Williams Elementary School**

1404 E Street, Williams, CA 95987  
530.473.2885  
williams.k12.ca.us

**Williams Upper Elementary School**

300 11th Street, Williams, CA 95987  
530.473.5304  
williams.k12.ca.us

**Williams Junior/Senior High School**

260 11th Street, Williams, CA 95987  
530.473.5369  
williams.k12.ca.us

**Williams Unified School District Office**

26011th Street, Williams, CA 95987  
530.473.2550  
williams.k12.ca.us



# Colusa County Office of Education Directory

## **Administrative Services**

Aaron Heinz, Deputy Superintendent of Administrative Services  
530.458.0350 ext. 10357  
aheinz@ccoe.net

## **"And Literacy For All"**

Stefani Santana, Literacy Coordinator  
530.458.0350 ext. 10326  
ssantana@ccoe.net

## **Business Services**

Angelina Guizar, Director of Business Services  
530.458.0350 ext. 10362  
aguizar@ccoe.net

## **Children's Services**

Vicki Markss, Director of Children's Services  
530.458.0350 ext. 10313  
vmarkss@ccoe.net

## **Communications & Public Relations**

Alissa Maas, Director of Communications & Public Relations  
530.458.0350 ext. 10836  
amaas@ccoe.net

## **Educational Services**

John Ithurburn, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services  
530.473.1350 ext. 10834  
jithurburn@ccoe.net

## **First 5 Colusa**

Ginger Harlow, Executive Director of First 5 Colusa  
530.458.5555  
gharlow@ccoe.net

## **Human Resources**

Sabrina Myers, Director of Human Resources  
530.458.0350 ext. 10351  
sabinamyers@ccoe.net

## **Prevention Services**

Kevin Douglas, Student Support Services Manager  
530.473.1350 ext.10821  
kdouglas@ccoe.net

## **School Attendance Review Board**

Jennifer Wayman, Director of Student Support & Outreach  
530.473.1350 ext. 10805  
jwayman@ccoe.net

## **Special Education/SELPA**

Jessica Haney, Director of Special Education/SELPA  
530.473.1350 ext. 10846  
jghaney@ccoe.net

## **Student Services**

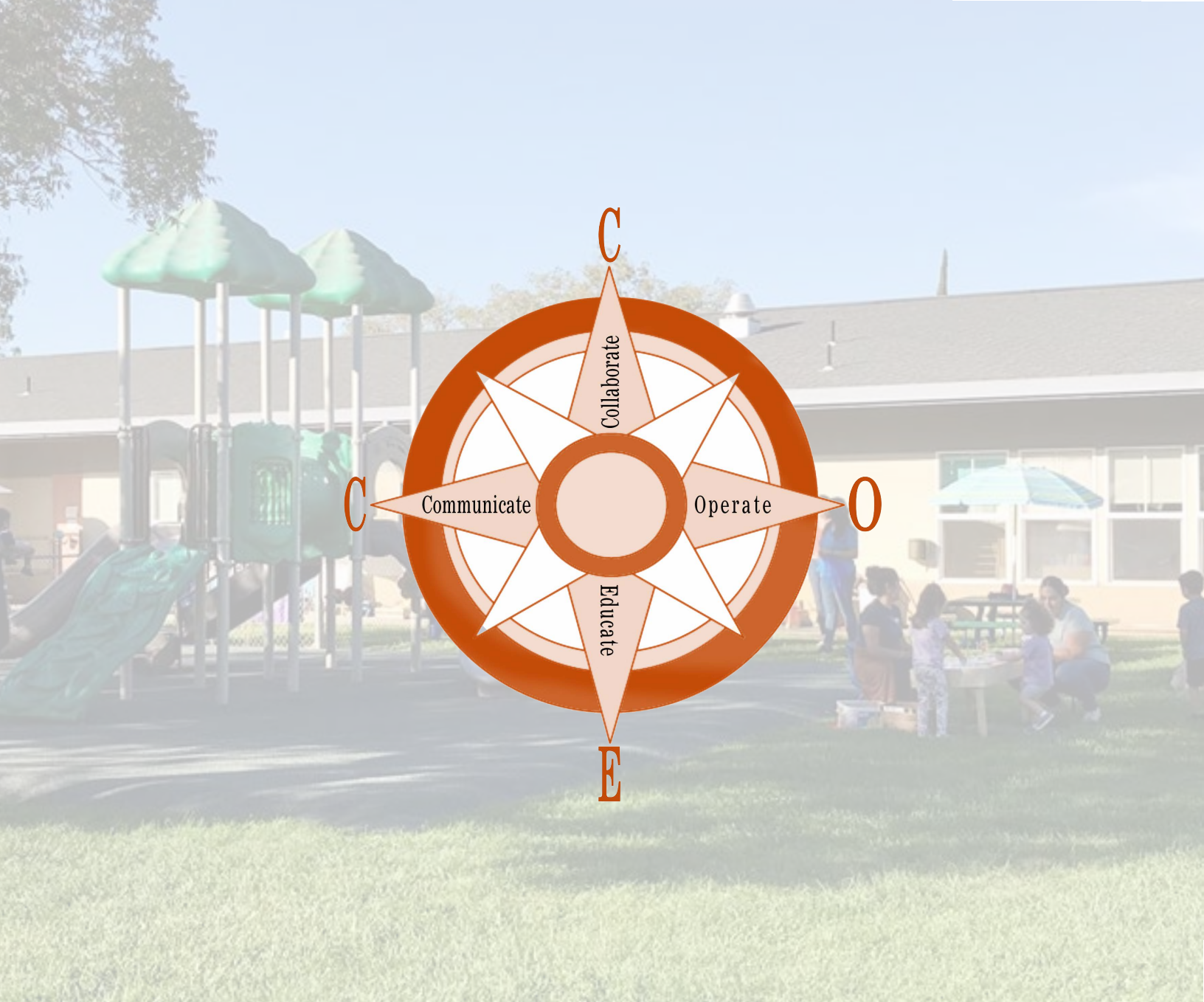
Chuck Wayman, Deputy Superintendent of Student Services  
530.473.1350 ext. 10806  
cwayman@ccoe.net

## **Superintendent of Schools**

Michael P. West, Colusa County Superintendent of Schools  
530.458.0350  
mwest@ccoe.net

## **Technology Services**

Alex Evans, Director of Technology Services  
530.458.0350 ext. 10355  
aevans@ccoe.net



*Learn more about the Colusa County Office of Education at [ccoe.net](http://ccoe.net)*



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