

PARTICIPANTS

Renee Arkus is executive director of fiscal services for Long Beach Unified School District. In her 20 years in school district accounting, she has served in several different positions supporting budget, accounting and payroll. In her current role, she supports the district in monitoring the fiscal impacts of changes in state, federal and local funding, as well as increased costs associated with retirement and health care costs. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in accounting from the University of California, Riverside.

Sara Bachez is assistant executive director of governmental relations at the California Association of School Business Officials. Previously, she served as legislative advocate for the Association of California School Administrators. She served for five years as a budget consultant for the Assembly Budget Committee, where she administered \$15 billion in general fund expenditures for California's higher education systems, the California Student Aid Commission, child care and development programs, and the California Employment and Development Department. She holds a BA in mass communications from the University of California, Berkeley and an MBA from California State University, Sacramento.

Claudia Davis is associate superintendent for administrative services at the Calaveras County Office of Education. She oversees the business and administrative functions of County Office operations and Calaveras County Special Education, and is responsible for fiscal oversight and support of the county's four school districts. Previously, she was chief business official for Vallecito Union School District for four years. She began her career in public administration as chief financial officer at Tuolumne General Hospital in Sonora, California. She holds a master's degree in business administration from The Drucker School of Management at Claremont Graduate University.

Michael Fine is chief executive officer of Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT). Before joining FCMAT in 2015 as the agency's chief administrative officer, Mike served a combined 25 years as interim superintendent, deputy superintendent of business services and governmental relations, and assistant superintendent. Prior to school business, he spent ten years in financial management for a defense contractor. He has a long history in governmental relations, working closely with policy makers in Sacramento on behalf of California's K-12 students.

Deborah Gonzalez is vice president of government affairs and chief data officer at PPIC. She and her staff work to connect PPIC research with policymakers and community leaders. A longtime Capitol staffer, she served as policy and fiscal director for six legislative leaders and worked on a wide variety of issues—including the state budget, education reform, infrastructure funding, and public safety. She holds a law degree from the McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific, and a BA from Claremont McKenna College, where she majored in international relations.

Julien Lafortune is a research fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California, where he specializes in K-12 education. His primary areas of focus include education finance, school capital funding policy, and educational tracking and stratification. He has published research on the impacts of school finance reforms on student achievement in the *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*. He holds a PhD in economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

Paul Warren is a research associate at the Public Policy Institute of California, where he focuses on K-12 education finance and accountability. Before he joined PPIC, he worked in the California Legislative Analyst's Office for more than 20 years as a policy analyst and director. He primarily analyzed education policy, but he also addressed welfare and tax issues. Prior to that, he was chief consultant to the state Assembly's committee on education. He also served as deputy director for the California Department of Education, helping to implement testing and accountability programs. He holds a master's degree in public policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.