



For Immediate Release

Press Contact: Cody Zimmer, Communications Manager, [codyz@casponline.org](mailto:codyz@casponline.org), (916) 444-1595

## **CASP Leaders Meet with Legislators in Sacramento, Support SB 903 (Padilla), AB 1540 (González) and Other Key Initiatives**

Sacramento, CA, March 19, 2026 – The California Association of School Psychologists (CASP) and its members convened in Sacramento on March 10 for the association’s annual Legislative Action Day. Participants met with legislators to express support for key legislation that promotes the well-being of the students, schools, and communities they serve. They announced support for both SB 903 (Padilla) and AB 1540 (González).

Additionally, they advocated for the \$509 million increase in special education funding proposed in the Governor’s 2026-27 Budget, the \$40 million investment to help schools administer screenings and train school staff, and encouraged the legislature to approve the reappropriation of \$14.4 million General Funds from the 2021 Budget Act for the Golden State Teacher Grant Program in 2026-27, as proposed in the Governor’s budget.

SB 903 was created to protect individuals seeking therapy or psychotherapy services by ensuring those services are provided only by qualified, licensed professionals, not AI chatbots or AI therapists. Even though AI cannot replace these professionals, AI services have proliferated. SB 903 would prohibit individuals or companies, including those using AI, from offering or advertising therapy or psychotherapy in California unless a licensed professional is responsible for the care.

AB 1540 will restore the “Press 3” LGBTQ+ Youth Crisis Hotline routing option available through the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. In July 2025, by order of the President, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ended all contracts with 988 sub-network providers, leaving these youth without specialized care services. Last year, more than 70,000 LGBTQ+ youth in California called the hotline without specialized support. AB 1540 will reinstate this critical and life-saving intervention, with the potential to save thousands of lives.

CASP President Chris Jones remarked, "CASP member engagement is growing at this crucial juncture. Compared to last year, twice as many CASP members met with legislators to advocate for school psychologists and licensed educational psychologists (LEPs). Legislative Day is important because it provides us with an opportunity to tell our stories and explain the crucial role our profession plays in supporting our schoolchildren and communities."

Michele Custer, Co-Chair of the CASP Legislative and Advocacy Committee, stated, “When school psychologists from across California unite, from emerging graduate students to distinguished emeritus leaders, we amplify the voice of a profession committed to student well-being. CASP’s Advocacy in Action Days highlighted the power of collaboration and storytelling in advancing educational policy and securing the resources schools need. The energy and passion shared will continue to drive our advocacy on behalf of students, families, and communities.”

Dr. Jeannine Topalian, Co-Chair of the CASP Legislative and Advocacy Committee, added, "Policy decisions directly shape the mental health services students receive in schools. Legislative Action Day gives school psychologists the opportunity to bring our expertise to lawmakers and advocate for the policies, funding, and workforce development needed to meet the needs of today’s students."

The [California Association of School Psychologists](https://casponline.org) is a 2,000-member, 75-year-old statewide professional association representing school psychologists and licensed educational psychologists (LEPs) in California. The CASP mission is to foster the well-being of the children, schools, and communities it serves through legislative advocacy, professional development, communications, publications, ethics guidelines, and direct services to its members.