



CALIFORNIA STATE TREASURER JOHN CHIANG

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Treasurer Kicks Off 2nd Annual Scholar Dollars Program to Support K-8 Public and Charter Schools

*\$300,000 grant program provides funding for extracurricular activities vital to a well-rounded education*

**SACRAMENTO** An important part of a young person's education happens outside the classroom—in extracurricular activities like sports, music or computer lab. But California school districts, facing tight budgets, have found themselves forced to cut back or cancel many of these vital after-school programs.

To help, California State Treasurer John Chiang today announced the second year of [Scholar Dollars](#), an innovative grant program that makes more than \$300,000 available to schools to pay for extracurricular and after-school programs.

"The Scholar Dollars program sows a wide field with a single seed," said Chiang. "In the short-term, it provides hundreds of grade school children with the means to start an after-school tutoring program, buy band equipment, or take a field trip to a science museum they may not otherwise be able to afford. With the long-term horizon in my sight, this is another step I am taking to ensure every California child has a college savings account to battle both rising tuition and out-of-control student loan debt. "

This year, the program will award 20 grants, ranging from \$5,000 to \$30,000 each, depending on school size, to K-8 public and charter schools in California. Schools can spend their grants on musical instruments, computers, library books, gardening tools or sports equipment, or support enrichment programs like tutoring labs, student counseling, science and technology instruction, and many other activities.

[Watch video – State Treasurer John Chiang Kicks Off 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Scholar Dollars Program](#)

Scholar Dollars also helps the adults, by giving a break to the administrators, teachers and parents who spend many of their weekends and evenings at bake sales, car washes and other events to raise money for the equipment and programs that are essential to providing kids a well-rounded education.

Scholar Dollars is administered by [ScholarShare 529](#), California's college savings plan. The program recognizes the critical role that California schools play in preparing students for college success by providing essential extracurricular programs that foster college-going cultures on their campuses.

In its first year, Scholar Dollars was immensely successful. In 2017, more than 390 schools across the state registered and over 411,000 votes were cast. All told, the program awarded \$300,000 to support extracurricular activities and afterschool programs. Schools spent their Scholar Dollar grants in a variety of ways. Alfred B. Nobel Charter Middle School in Northridge purchased 80 new Chromebooks.

Village School in Campbell sent a classroom of 5th-graders to science camp. Shannon Ranch Elementary School in Visalia built a much-needed new running track.

“This grant has helped Nobel go a long way towards meeting our goal of ensuring that all students have access to a computer to increase computer literacy, research skills and create products that have real world implications,” said Felicia Drew, Assistant Principal, Alfred B. Nobel Charter Middle School. “With grants like Scholar Dollars, we can continue giving our children an extraordinary school experience and guide them into being lifelong learners,” added James Crawford, Principal, Village School.

Eligible schools can register online at [MyScholarDollars.com](http://MyScholarDollars.com) and apply for a grant. The registration period is open now through March 7, 2018. Enrollment is as easy as ABC. There are no formal grant requests or cumbersome red tape. A school administrator, teacher or PTA president can enroll a school in a matter of minutes. All K-8 public and charter schools in California are already uploaded to the Scholar Dollars website, so enrollment is as simple as selecting your school from the list, entering your contact information and describing the program your school wants funded.

Once a school is registered and approved to participate in the grant program, it will be included in the voting period. Encouraging your community to vote during this time is a critical part of the process because the more votes your school receives, the better positioned it is to win a grant.

Anyone 18 years or older is eligible to vote and can cast a vote once per day during the voting period. Voting runs from March 12, 2018 to March 23, 2018. The Scholar Dollars program provides a variety of resources to help schools get out the vote, such as a customizable PDF flyer as well as copy and images to use in email blasts and/or social media posts.

ScholarShare 529, which supports Scholar Dollars, offers families a diverse set of tools to help pay for college, including investment options, tax-deferred growth and withdrawals free from state and federal taxes when used for higher-education expenses. Studies show that kids with a savings account in their name are six times more likely to attend and graduate college.

To learn more, enroll or vote for a school, visit [MyScholarDollars.com](http://MyScholarDollars.com).