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Advocacy news from the California State PTA Legislation Team

To learn more about the California State PTA positions on bills currently before the California Legislature, click [HERE](#).

Big events take center stage for education

Greetings, advocates! Two big events took center stage in January – the adoption of new emergency regulations for the [Local Control and Accountability Plan \(LCAP\)](#) by the State Board of Education (SBE), and California State PTA’s annual [Legislation Conference](#), **“Connecting Families and Schools Through Advocacy.”** Both were moments of PTA advocacy at its best!

On January 16 at its regular monthly meeting, the SBE heard testimony from hundreds of education stakeholders from all over the state as it considered proposed emergency regulations to define how LCAP would work. California State PTA’s Legislation Team was out in force, and joined by local advocates from Third District PTA, to speak up and speak out for kids. Click [here](#) to view the regulations.

Informing and educating all parents about LCFF-LCAP is a top priority for California State PTA. As a grassroots association with over a century of experience in connecting families and schools and helping parents develop leadership, communications and advocacy skills, we’ll be working with schools, school boards and many other groups to help make available a range of information, resources and training. Click [here](#) to view the latest materials.

At the end of the month, state PTA’s eagerly-awaited Legislation Conference drew more than 140 delegates from PTA units, councils and districts from San Diego to Cloverdale and everywhere in between. All were informed and inspired by presentations from Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, State Board of Education Vice President Dr. Ilene Straus, Rick Simpson, Deputy Chief of Staff to Speaker of the Assembly John Pérez and many more.

A fabulous panel discussion on school climate brought out thought-provoking considerations preparing delegates to participate in developing their LCAPs this spring. California’s Legislative Analyst, Mac Taylor, provided an authoritative look at the Governor’s proposed budget, and that view was expanded on by Senator Mark Leno and Assembly Member Rocky Chávez, from their respective chambers’ budget committees.

The importance of early childhood care and education was the focus of a panel discussion featuring Assembly Member Shirley Weber, Camille Maben, and Debra McMannis. Common Core State Standards (CCSS) implementation and the anticipated Smarter Balanced computer-based statewide testing was explored by Assembly Member Susan Bonilla and Deb Sigman, deputy superintendent of public instruction.

The culmination of the two-day conference came with visits to the offices of our legislators to speak for every child with one voice. PTA leaders were welcomed in legislative offices and had very positive discussions on issues of mutual concern.

Click [here](#) to see more highlights of the conference. If you missed the conference this year, please make a note on your calendar for early 2015 to "*Attend California State PTA's Legislation Conference!*"

This issue of *Sacramento Update* features big news on the proposed budget for education, and a run-down of PTA bills from 2013. Some have died, having failed passage out of their house of origin by February 1, other bills remain active, and state PTA will continue to advocate our positions on them. National PTA legislative priorities are reported from Washington, D.C., and we conclude with an article about the importance of civic learning.

For more information please contact Director of Legislation, Kathy Moffat at legislation@capta.org.

Good news for schools – can this really be describing the budget?

The Governor kept his promise to support schools in this year's budget proposal. Due to the improving economy, the Proposition 98 guarantee was increased by \$6.3 billion to a total of \$61.6 billion. He proposed an average increase of funds to schools of 10.9 percent or approximately \$751 per student which includes an increase of \$4.5 billion in ongoing [Local Control Funding Formula \(LCFF\)](#) funding.

In addition, he is proposing to eliminate all deferral payments to schools, a total of \$5.5 billion in one-time dollars which are owed to schools from prior years.

The proposal also includes \$46.5 million for student assessments to align with the new [Common Core](#) state standards and \$316.5 million to support energy efficient projects in schools per Proposition 39. There is also a cost of living adjustment for the few categorical programs not included in LCFF.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the Governor's budget proposal is his inclusion of a Proposition 98 reserve fund. He stated the fund is necessary to smooth out education funding and prevent the drastic cuts schools have recently experienced.

Both this reserve and the repayment of all deferrals are creating debate in Sacramento. Many people question the implementation of a reserve when schools still haven't reached their 2007-08 funding levels. Additionally, there are questions about who would decide when reserve funds should be released and what criteria would be used to make the determination to release the funds.

As for the deferral repayment, many groups believe allocating some of the money to continue implementation of Common Core curriculum might be a better use of the money as school districts have already budgeted to receive their deferral money in future years.

All of these issues will be discussed in the coming months. Watch for updates here.

It is important to note that even with these budget inclusions, California is still far below the national average in per-pupil spending, and far below California funding levels of 6 years ago.

For more information please contact Budget and Education Finance Advocate, Shayne Silva at ssilva@capta.org.

Education bill update

The following bills are no longer active:

[AB 430 \(Olsen\) – Seek Amendments](#) This bill would have authorized a school district to meet with representatives of the teacher's union to establish an alternative teacher evaluation system that includes using student test results, classroom observation, and teacher input.

[AB 558 \(Cooley\) – Support](#) This bill would have created a way to restore class size incentives in four-year increments.

[AB 684 \(Medina\) – Support if Amended](#) This bill authorizes the California Workforce Investment Board to provide grants from available state and federal funds to institutions that provide instruction to persons who are preparing for the General Equivalency Degree test.

[SB 432 \(Price\) – Support](#) This bill would have required the API Committee to consult with individuals who are experts in innovation to develop a public index of achievement in classes that foster creativity, innovation and problem solving.

[SB 524 \(Lara\) – Support](#) This bill encourages the development of a voluntary K – 12 curriculum to educate pupils and their families about college and career opportunities.

[SB 693 \(Correa\) – Oppose](#) This bill allows for a tax credit to low and middle-income families for education-related expenses (vouchers).

Bills on which we took positions last year that are still active:

AB 455 (Medina) –Support This bill authorizes the State Board of Education to adopt Braille and American Sign Language English and mathematics standards aligned to the [Common Core State Standards](#) for pupils who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, blind and/or visually impaired.

SB 660 (Hancock) – Support This bill places career tech programs in a block grant that protects the funds from flexibility.

For more information please contact Education Advocate, Donna Artukovic at dartukovic@capta.org.

Family engagement bills

AB 273 (Rendon) was reintroduced recently to see if it could find passage through the legislature in January. PTA took a support position on this bill, and unfortunately it failed to meet the deadline for passage out of the first house. **AB 273** would have required the Superintendent, in consultation with the California Children and Families Commission, to determine the agencies and support services that qualify for funding and establish standards to ensure quality child care.

Two other bills that PTA approved of also failed due to deadline.

AB 275 (Alejo) would have changed references from "migrant child" to "migratory child," and would have required the state master plan to be developed and revised as necessary by the Superintendent of Public Instruction in consultation with the State Parent Advisory Council. The bill would have required the Superintendent to develop a monitoring instrument and procedure to annually monitor each local educational agency and region receiving funds for the provision of services to migratory children.

AB 1178 (Bocanegra) would have established the California Promise Neighborhood Initiative. This initiative would have developed a system of 40 California promise neighborhoods throughout the state to support children's development.

For more information please contact Family Engagement Advocate, Dianna MacDonald at dmacdonald@capta.org.

Federal update

National PTA recently released its [2014 Public Policy Agenda](#) that makes recommendations for Congress. The following are priority areas for PTA advocacy.

General Education

Reauthorization of ESEA-NCLB remains a top priority for National PTA. In addition, PTA is fighting for improvements to ESEA-NCLB, including access to well-rounded curricula, equity protections for disadvantaged populations and accountability to parents and the community.

Family Engagement in Education

National PTA endorses the [Family Engagement in Education Act of 2013](#) (H.R.2662/S.1291). The Act would support effective family engagement strategies where they are needed most while encouraging state and local district flexibility in identifying programming that works best. In addition to full passage of the bill, PTA will push for provisions to be included in the reauthorization of ESEA-NCLB.

Special Education

Through the reauthorization of ESEA-NCLB and implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), National PTA will continue to advocate to ensure that all students graduate from high school college- and career-ready, will see that family engagement remains a fundamental principle of IDEA and will work to ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are fully protected.

Early Childhood Education

National PTA supports federal and state incentives for high-quality child care and preschool programs that are affordable and accessible, coordinated at all levels, characterized by high standards for teaching, training, health and safety and incorporate strong family engagement components.

Education Funding

Federal investment in quality education is critical to our nation's long-term success. PTA supports replacing the sequester cuts with a balanced and fair approach, protecting vital education investments in all federal deficit reduction efforts, securing dedicated funding for family engagement in education, increasing funding for IDEA and maintaining or increasing investments in quality early learning programs.

School Safety

School safety is a crucial component of effective learning. National PTA believes that the safety of children and faculty in all school settings is a fundamental right and has made it the utmost priority for our programmatic and advocacy work. In 2014, National PTA will work to support federal programming and policies related to safe routes to school, bullying prevention and the protection of children from gun violence.

Child Health and Nutrition

In 2014, PTA strongly supports continued implementation of the Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, including healthy guidelines for all foods sold in schools, strengthening Local Wellness Policies and improving nutrition standards for meals served as part of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs.

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Protecting the rights of children and youth involved in the justice system continues to be an area of focus for National PTA. PTA supports a reauthorization of the JJDPA that includes improved provisions that keep youth who commit non-criminal

offenses out of secure juvenile corrections facilities, and that ensures the Jail Removal and Sight and Sound Separation core protections are extended to all children under 18 years of age.

Please contact Federal Advocate, Brian Bonner at bbonner@capta.org with any questions.

National PTA Takes Action Network

[Subscribe](#) to the National PTA Takes Action Network today!

Sign up for the PTA Takes Action Network to stay informed on the latest happenings on Capitol Hill and to learn more about legislative issues affecting families, schools, and communities. By subscribing to the PTA Takes Action Network you will receive:

- PTA's monthly federal policy e-newsletter and;
- Action alerts that provide you the opportunity to weigh in on key federal policy issues with your Members of Congress.

For more information please contact Federal Advocate, Brian Bonner at bbonner@capta.org.

Civics education – preparing teens for responsible citizenship

“What’s it all about?” is one of the most important questions we need to ask ourselves as we look at education in California. What should our children learn? Should we continue to emphasize memorization over participation? Are we fine with just helping our kids learn facts and skills or does all of this fit into a bigger mission? The larger mission of our schools dates back to the creation of public education: Preparing our children not just for jobs but, preparing them to be responsible adults in a democracy.

So how are we doing?

According to the California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning – not so well. We are facing a crisis in civic participation. The Task Force is holding regional meetings within the next few months throughout California to discuss strategies to help more kids be ready to be adults.

The proposed recommendations are to give all children a high quality civic learning experience – starting in kindergarten. This includes not only the knowledge of how our democracy works but also the skills and values to:

- Think creatively
- Use imagination
- Work collaboratively

- Listen to other perspectives
- Communicate well
- And yes, do good – work to make things better

Regional Meeting Dates and Locations:

- February 7, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., Los Angeles County Office of Education
- March 8, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Sheraton Hotel LAX
- March 20, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., Larry E. Reider Education Center, Bakersfield
- March 24, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., San Diego Central Library
- March 25, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., Roy C. Hill Education Center, San Bernardino
- March 28, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., State Capitol, Sacramento
- April 1, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Oakland City Hall

A full list of the recommendations, including legislative suggestions, is available [here](#).

For more information please contact Education Advocate, Carol Kocivar at ckocivar@capta.org.

California State PTA Legislation Action Committee

The California State PTA Legislation Action Committee (LAC) meets during the legislative session, and takes action on pending state and federal legislation based on the PTA's priorities and adopted authorities.

The LAC includes the director of legislation, president, president-elect, executive director, vice presidents or representatives from the commissions for communications, community concerns, education, health, family engagement, two district presidents and others as may be appointed by the president. This committee shall meet on call upon the approval of the president.

For more information, please refer to the Advocacy section of the [California State PTA Toolkit](#). Click [here](#) to view currently adopted positions on legislation. For more information or to inquire if a bill is under consideration by the California State PTA, contact the Director of Legislation at legislation@capta.org.

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