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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](#).

## Newly-signed state budget supports young children

When Governor Brown signed the 2014-15 state budget, our most vulnerable children benefited from more access to preschool, more money for local priorities through the [Local Control Funding Formula \(LCFF\)](#), and more investment in [Common Core State Standards](#) implementation.

PTA supports preschool for all. With this budget we are closer to this goal. The budget sets a goal of providing preschool or transitional kindergarten for all low-income 4 year olds by June 2015. In addition, dollars are allocated for a transitional kindergarten curriculum aligned to preschool standards developed by the California Department of Education.

K-12 programs also received additional dollars relative to the governor's January budget proposal. Proposition 98's funding level for 2013-14 is \$58.3 billion, and rises to \$60.9 billion for 2014-15. Included in these amounts is \$450 million to pay down the K-14 education mandates backlog, with the intent that funding freed up from this payment be dedicated to implementation of the Common Core State Standards. This is one of the priorities that the California State PTA worked for in our advocacy on the budget. Over the next three years the recent payment deferrals owed to K-14 will be repaid, with all deferrals repaid in 2014-15 if revenues come in higher than projected.

LCFF funding is increased an additional \$250 million above the governor's proposed \$4.5 billion. Career technical education receives a one-time allocation of \$250 million for the Career Pathways Trust competitive grant program.

There are two significant changes in the budget for schools. The Rainy Day fund is a deal struck with both houses and both parties of the Legislature for a constitutional amendment to set aside capital gains taxes in years when these are high, into reserve funds to be used in years of decreased state revenues. There is also a Prop 98 reserve fund which will be funded when several specific criteria are met, including pay back of the maintenance factor debt to schools. Given these criteria, contributions to the Prop 98 reserve fund may not take effect until after the end of

the decade.

In the waning days of budget negotiations, language was approved to cap the amount of reserves local school districts may maintain once the Prop 98 reserve begins. The cap on local reserves goes into effect only if the Rainy Day reserve is approved by the voters in November. This addition to the budget language is controversial as it infringes on local control. Additionally, PTA and others believe such a policy decision should be vetted in policy committees of the legislature to assure transparency, not inserted into budget negotiations at the last minute.

The second change in school budgets is the governor's proposal for funding the California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS). CalSTRS is funded by the state, school districts and teachers each paying a percentage into the fund. This system is severely underfunded into the future.

The governor is proposing to increase the contribution that each group makes to the fund. He is proposing that school districts increase their current contribution of 8.25 percent by 0.65 percent beginning in the 2014-15 school year, and increasing the percentage by 1.85 percent each year up to 19.1 percent by 2020-21. There must be a review every 5 years to report on the unfunded liability and identify adjustments in contribution rates required to eliminate the unfunded liability.

California State PTA raised significant concerns about the initial CalSTRS proposal in the Governor's May Revision which would have dramatically impacted schools in the current year. The legislature ultimately devised a modified plan that mitigates the impact on districts in the first two years, which is a positive. However, it is still imperative that the legislature and governor put as much energy into developing a long-term plan to assure adequate school funding as they put into developing a long-term plan for CalSTRS sustainability.

While we are disappointed that there were not larger increases in funds for schools, PTA is pleased to see additional money for Common Core implementation, for local decision making through LCFF, and to benefit our youngest learners. These were PTA's top priorities for this budget, and this budget certainly has better news for children than we have seen in recent years.

For more information, please contact Budget and Education Finance Advocate Shayne Silva at [ssilva@capta.org](mailto:ssilva@capta.org).

## **Early childhood education – a PTA priority**

PTA supports [SB 1123 \(Liu\)](#) and early childhood education. The first three years of life are critical to brain development in which children acquire the ability to think, speak, learn, and reason. During these first 36 months, children need good health, strong families and positive early learning experiences to lay the foundation for later school success. Infants and toddlers from low-income families are at greater risk for

a variety of poorer outcomes and vulnerabilities, such as later school failure, learning disabilities, behavior problems, developmental delay and health impairments.

**SB 1123** will:

- Expand access for parents of infants and toddlers from low-income families to quality early learning and parental support services.
- Expand access to full-day, full-year wrap around state preschool.
- Rename the general child care program for infants and toddlers to California Strong Start services.
- Allow for a choice of program delivery options to meet the unique needs of families – including child care, voluntary home visitation and evidence-based family engagement and support services.
- Increase quality standards and the adjustment factors of California state preschool and Strong Start, relative to the existing general child care for infants and toddlers program.
- Eliminate the family fee for part-day state preschool.
- Allow children’s eligibility in child care and development programs to be annually determined, supporting continuity of care by ensuring children do not lose services mid-year.

The most effective way to help infants and toddlers is to promote positive parent-child relationships. Currently, California’s child care and development programs lack many parent education and support services. **SB 1123** has many components that are necessary to promote positive learning environments and to acknowledge that parents are a child’s first teacher.

For more information, please contact Family Engagement Advocate Dianna MacDonald at [dmacdonald@capta.org](mailto:dmacdonald@capta.org).

## **State Board of Education temporarily suspends API, moves ahead with Smarter Balanced field testing and implementation of the LCFF/LCAP**

In March, the State Board of Education (SBE) announced that the U. S. Department of Education has approved California’s request to waive portions of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) that require the state to produce annual accountability scores based on the Academic Performance Index (API). The approval eliminated what would have amounted to a requirement to “double test” students, as well as the possibility of the withholding of federal funds for being out of compliance. Approval of the waiver enabled the SBE to temporarily suspend the API and cleared the way for California’s transition to the [Common Core State Standards](#) and the new Smarter Balanced Assessment aligned to those standards.

Results of the 2015 administration of California’s new assessment, California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) will be used to calculate

a new base API. The 2016 administration of CAASPP will provide information needed to determine growth in student achievement for a new API.

Field testing of the Smarter Balanced computer adaptive assessment system by students in grades 3-8 and 11 is still underway, but the Department of Education reported to the SBE in May that the field test has performed remarkably well, exceeding all expectations. The SBE continues to receive updates on activities on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and CAASPP.

Implementation activities for the [Local Control Funding Formula \(LCFF\)](#) and the [Local Control Accountability Plan \(LCAP\)](#) were also on the SBE's May agenda. PTA testified highlighting the many resources that have been created by PTA and used in getting the word out to our members about the opportunity for parents to be involved in creating the LCAP. A coalition of students also testified, asking the SBE to make more explicit their role in the process. PTA believes students are the ultimate stakeholders and spoke in support of their efforts at the SBE meeting.

For more information, please contact State Board of Education Liaison Cecelia Mansfield at [cmansfield@capta.org](mailto:cmansfield@capta.org).

## **Sexual abuse and sex trafficking prevention education bill receives bipartisan support**

According to the FBI, an estimated 293,000 American youths currently are at risk of becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation. These youth come from urban, rural and suburban areas and are frequently moved between trafficking hubs to further isolate and control them.

The average age of entry into the sex trade is 12-14 years old. Almost every trafficked victim has had a history of sexual abuse earlier in his or her childhood which makes these teens vulnerable to the tactics used by human traffickers and exploiters.

Traffickers recruit most of their victims in or around many middle and high schools and other places where youth tend to congregate such as parks, malls, transit stops and shelters. They use a variety of tactics including using young men acting as boyfriends to recruit classmates and friends.

Education is the key to preventing sexual abuse and sex trafficking from occurring in the first place. [SB 1165 \(Mitchell\)](#) would require the Instructional Quality Commission to develop and incorporate a distinct category on sexual abuse and sex trafficking prevention education into the next revision of the "Healthy Framework for California Public Schools." Important information on sexual abuse and sex trafficking would be incorporated into the comprehensive sexual health education that our students are taught in grades 7-12, once during junior high and once during high school.

California State PTA took a SUPPORT position on this bill at its March Legislative Action Committee meeting and was asked to testify in support of the proposed legislation alongside a representative from Californians Against Slavery, a sex trafficking survivor, and a parent of a child sex trafficking victim. **SB 1165** received bipartisan support from the Senate Education Committee and was passed out of committee to be heard next in Senate Appropriations where any fiscal implications of the bill will be explored.

For more information, please contact Community Concerns Advocate Shereen Walter at [swalter@capta.org](mailto:swalter@capta.org).

## Teens and e-cigarettes

The Centers for Disease Control reported that in 2012 more than 1.78 million middle and high school students nationwide have tried e-cigarettes.

"The increased use of e-cigarettes by teens is deeply troubling," said CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. "Nicotine is a highly addictive drug. Many teens who start with e-cigarettes may be condemned to struggling with a lifelong addiction to nicotine and conventional cigarettes."

So what are e-cigarettes and what is California doing to protect our youth?

E-cigarettes are a device used to heat a water/nicotine solution to a vapor which is then inhaled and the by-product water vapor is exhaled. The e-cigarettes look like small pens or the more familiar tobacco cigarettes. Designed to help adult tobacco smokers stop smoking and diminish the effects of hot tars on the lungs, many teens have adopted the "vaping" (rather than smoking) habit. Manufacturers of e-cigarettes and vapor solutions deny marketing to youth, but their actions suggest otherwise. Nicotine solutions are often flavored to mimic fruit or candy, have names such as starburst, gummy bear or peach smoothie and are even called e-juice. The e-cigarette also carries the potential for misuse with other more dangerous drugs.

In California e-cigarette sales to minors are restricted (California Health and Safety Code § 119405). Sale to a minor is a violation and subject to fines. Many communities, including Los Angeles, have banned vaping in the same way smoking in a public place is banned. The internet and interstate sales have become a preferred method for buying these products by our youth. In an effort to close this major loophole and make it harder to obtain e-cigarettes, Assembly Member Dickinson has introduced **AB 1500** that requires an adult over 18 years old sign for these products at the time of delivery. It is a small but significant step and we support the bill and applaud his efforts. Unfortunately, this bill has failed to pass out of its house of origin, and so it is now considered dead.

The United States Congress has also weighed in, allowing the Food and Drug Administration to restrict sales to youth, but not restricting marketing, internet

sales, or the flavoring of the vaping solution. Over time we hope to see further action in both Washington and Sacramento to protect and educate our youth regarding vaping and e-cigarettes.

For more information, please contact Health Advocate Cathy Hall at [chall@capta.org](mailto:chall@capta.org).

## **PTA supports bills to fund the arts; assist English Language Learners**

Legislators are demonstrating a renewed interest in the arts. Although an arts-integrated approach in the [Common Core State Standards](#) may bring arts into some classrooms, funding continues to be a major issue. We have taken a SUPPORT position on a number of bills – [AB 1662 \(Calderon\)](#) and [SB 1432 \(Lieu\)](#) – which will create a new level of funding for the [California Arts Council](#). The California Arts Council has a longstanding commitment to support arts education in schools, and the grants they provide enable teaching artists to bring their skills and experience to the classroom.

Studies have shown that arts integration increases student learning, and students who participate in the arts are five times less likely to drop out of school. The California Arts Council was created in 1975 under Jerry Brown and in 2003 was funded at \$32 million. Since then the funding has remained flat at a miserly one million dollars. After 2003, California has ranked last among all the states in per capita investments in the arts, allocating just three cents per person from the General Fund. The Calderon and Lieu bills may change that and bring new funding to this very important area of our curriculum.

English Language Learners are reclassified when they are considered proficient in English. However, reclassification of English learners throughout the state is inconsistent and has led to wide discrepancies in the system. In addition, English Language Learners have the lowest graduation rate of any other subgroup and nearly 50 percent of our kindergarteners last year were English learners. This is an extremely vulnerable population and one that is growing. Focus on these students is critical. We took SUPPORT positions on three bills that address some of these difficulties:

- [SB 1174 \(Lara\)](#) – puts a proposition on the November 2016 ballot that allows schools to offer language immersion programs available for all students – English speaking and non-English speaking.
- [AB 1892 \(Bocanegra\)](#) – permits schools to collect monies from the LCFF for reclassified English Learners for two years after they have been reclassified. Plans must be presented on how schools will delineate the services they provide for these students.
- [SB 1108 \(Padilla\)](#) – requires the Department of Education to recommend best practices for English learners. It also requires districts to report the academic progress of reclassified students and adds these students to the list

of numerically significant pupil subgroups.

Hopefully, with the infusion of the [Local Control Funding Formula \(LCFF\)](#) funding for English learners and the new legislation, these students can be successful, graduate from high school and go on to college and/or a career.

For more information or questions please contact Education Advocate, Donna Artukovic at [dartukovic@capta.org](mailto:dartukovic@capta.org).

## **PTA convention delivers wealth of information on advocacy for kids and changes in California education**

The 2014 California State PTA Convention, May 7-10 at the Los Angeles Convention Center was one of the best ever! For PTA leaders and members interested in learning more about children's advocacy and education policy, there were opportunities galore.

The California State PTA Legislation Team put on workshops featuring hands-on practice designing an advocacy campaign; guidance for council and district PTA leaders on building powerful advocacy teams; Ed100, online parent education course of study; ideas for PTA members interested in running for office; and Hot Topics, where Assembly Member Rocky Chavez and State Senator Carol Liu spoke about top priorities and answered questions. Delegates loved these workshops!

California Attorney General Kamala Harris gave a riveting keynote speech that drew attention to the critical issue of children who are chronically absent from school. Ms. Harris pointed out that contrary to popular opinion, children are not always resilient and don't always grow out of childhood problems. Poor school attendance is an indicator of problems in a child's life, and conversely, regular school attendance is a predictor of success later in life. Parents, schools and communities must work together to recognize children with chronic truancies, and provide them and their families appropriate assistance so that the children are able come to school every day. She has sponsored a suite of five legislative bills that the California State PTA is supporting aimed at identifying and assisting chronic absentees, and establishing practices and programs to recognize the issue and bring about effective solutions.

The EdSource Symposium was again held in conjunction with our convention. This year's symposium, boasting the largest attendance in its history, focused on "The New Accountability" and presented nationally recognized experts such as worldwide expert on education change Michael Fullan, University of Oregon's David Conley, and Stanford University's Linda Darling-Hammond. The symposium also spotlighted a panel discussion on the new Smarter Balanced testing, and among the panel of experts was our own Second District PTA Vice President for Communications, Michelle Parker!

On Friday, May 9, California State PTA joined with the League of Women Voters of

California in sponsoring a Candidates' Forum for the candidates for Superintendent of Public Instruction, Lydia Gutierrez, Tom Torlakson and Marshall Tuck. The three candidates responded to parents' questions and questions from the League of Women Voters. You can [view the forum](#) on our website.

As a popular new convention highlight, California State PTA President Colleen You moderated an extremely informative panel discussion on the new [Local Control Funding Formula \(LCFF\)](#) and [Local Control and Accountability Plans \(LCAP\)](#). Panelists included WestEd's Janelle Kubinec, Department of Education's Lupita Cortez Alcalá and Capitol Advisors' Kevin Gordon. These Sacramento experts gave new perspective to the LCFF, and recognized the critical role of parents and PTA in helping it to succeed. You can [view the panel discussion](#) on our website.

For more information, please contact Director of Legislation Kathy Moffat at [legislation@capta.org](mailto:legislation@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](mailto:legislation@capta.org).

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