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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](#).

In June, lawmakers in the state Capitol turn to budget negotiations and also narrow in on those bills that still have a chance of becoming law in the current session. California State PTA continues to pursue its advocacy goals both as part of this session and in other arenas.

State Budget Tops the News

By California State PTA Director of Legislation Shayne Silva

Governor Brown's [May Revision](#) of the 2016-17 state budget showed less revenue coming into the state than anticipated in January. For schools, this means Proposition 98 funding is still increasing but at a much slower rate. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) will be 95.7-percent funded in 2016-17 and the Department of Finance is projecting very low cost-of-living adjustments for the next few years. The deadline for state-budget approval is June 30.

Proposition 98 funding includes \$1.4 billion in one-time funding for schools. This repays most of the mandated costs the state owed school districts. The governor proposes that districts use this money "to further the implementation of the state adopted academic standards, make necessary investments in professional development, provide teacher induction to beginning teachers, address infrastructure and deferred maintenance needs, and purchase instructional materials and technology to prepare both students and teachers for success."

Some of the governor's other budget proposals quickly were rejected by members of the Legislature. These included a \$100 million K-12 School Facility Emergency Repair Revolving Loan program, \$20 million for charter school start-up grants and an Early Education Block Grant (EEBG) proposal.

While the Assembly rejected the governor's EEBG, they did propose adding 10,000 new preschool slots and 6,000 Alternative Payment slots, and increasing reimbursement rates to child care providers. The Senate included \$99 million for early education to increase reimbursement rates and slots.

At this point, the three proposals land in the Budget Conference Committee and will be negotiated by the budget chairs and leadership before negotiations begin with the governor. The Senate and Assembly also each have concerns regarding the impending teacher shortage and have proposed different ways to begin to address this issue. The Assembly also is proposing increasing the funding for the After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program, which falls under Proposition 98.

The governor spent some time during his May Revise message talking about the inevitability of the next economic recession and the importance of preparing for it. He is proposing an additional \$2-billion supplement to the state's Rainy Day Fund.

Meanwhile, even without a recession, schools will face increasing financial pressures in the coming years due to growing obligations for the PERS and STRS retirement plans and the new \$15-per-hour minimum wage. This makes passage of the [California Children's Education and Health Care Protection Act of 2016](#) on the November ballot critical. The measure would extend some of the taxes voters approved with Proposition 30 in 2012.

For more information, please contact Director of Legislation Shayne Silva at legislation@capta.org.

PTA-Sponsored AB 2680 Held in Committee, But Work Continues

By California State PTA Director of Legislation Shayne Silva

Our family-engagement bill -- [AB 2680](#) -- was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file. That means it is dead for this session of the Legislature. Assembly Member Susan Bonilla worked very closely with us on amendments that would get the bill out of the suspense file, but in the end the bill did not advance. One of the main issues to impact our bill was the decreased revenue from taxes in April, which led to less one-time money in the Prop. 98 budget.

That said, we can still claim a victory. All of you who wrote letters, tweeted, phoned and Facebooked have succeeded in elevating the importance of family engagement in the Capitol. We testified and made visits to committee members' offices and we engaged in the political process in a way we haven't in a long time. Because of our efforts, there is a conversation happening in Sacramento that wasn't happening before. Our bill started that conversation. Family engagement still is an organizational advocacy goal and our organization plans on ensuring the conversation continues in Sacramento. Stay tuned to see what next steps will be.

For more information, please contact Director of Legislation Shayne Silva at legislation@capta.org.

Some Family-Engagement Issues Remain on Lawmakers' Agenda

By California State PTA Family-Engagement Advocate Lea Darrah

From addressing the needs of military children and families to ensuring parents have time off to support their children in child care or school, California State PTA is advocating to ensure that every child gets the best opportunity to succeed.

We are continuing to support several family-engagement bills this session that are still working their way through the legislative process:

- [AB 492](#) (Gonzalez) would provide a \$50 diaper benefit to CalWORKS participants for every child 2 years of age or younger enrolled in child care.
- [AB 598](#) (Calderon) applies to family child care home settings and would help educate home providers regarding how to make sure their services are of high quality and are

educationally and developmentally appropriate. It creates new requirements for existing family child care home education networks.

- [AB 1679](#) (Weber), the Child Care and Development Services Act, would increase military families' eligibility for state preschool services by excluding from their income—for purposes of determining eligibility—the amount of the basic allowance for housing they receive when on active duty.
- [AB 2150](#) (Santiago) would maintain continuity of child care for some of the most vulnerable children. It would require that a family, upon establishing initial eligibility or ongoing eligibility for services under the Child Care and Development Services Act, be assured continued eligibility for not less than 12 months.
- [AB 2353](#) (McCarty) would require the California Department of Education to identify professional-development programs in culturally responsive instruction and provide links to those programs on its website for educators and instructional leaders.
- [AB 2405](#) (Gatto) would require most employers to annually provide employees at least eight hours of paid time off for planned absences in order to enroll their children in school or participate in school activities. It also contains other related provisions.
- [SB 1455](#) (Block) would provide that a pupil is considered a school district's resident when the pupil's parent is transferred or is pending transfer to a military installation within the district boundaries, before being physically in residence there. The bill would require a school district to accept applications by electronic means for enrollment and course registration for those pupils.

If you are interested in any of these bills, please get involved. Using social media is a great way to call out your support and ask members to make these bills into laws. California State PTA is on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) as are your local elected leaders. Engaging in the legislative process is just one more way to support your students and our wider community.

For more information about these bills, contact Family-Engagement Advocate Lea Darrah at ldarrah@capta.org.

Age Extension for Graduated Driver Licensing Dies in Senate Appropriations

By California State PTA Community Concerns Advocate Shereen Walter

Teen-driver-caused crashes are the leading cause of death and hospitalization for California's youth. Enacted in 1998, California's Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) Program has proven to reduce teen-crash risk by up to 40 percent for teens graduating from the program.

Co-sponsored by Impact Teen Drivers, [SB 1223](#) (Huff) would have extended the benefits of the education, training and graduated experience of the GDL Program to all newly licensed drivers in California by changing the GDL age range to 21 years of age. By extending age requirements to protect older novice drivers, more teens would have benefited from GDL's phased approach to licensure.

The AAA Foundation reports a steady number of teens who are not benefitting from GDL Program protections because they delay getting licensed until after age 18. Data from the California DMV and Department of Public Health show that there is a significant spike in teen-involved crashes leading to emergency-room visits, hospitalization and death for 18- and 19-year-old drivers not licensed through the GDL system.

In their 2014 report on GDL, the National Safety Council and the Traffic Injury Research Foundations panel of international researchers concluded it is not necessarily how old a driver is when he or she is licensed but rather how much experience a novice driver has acquired that reduces crash risk. Therefore, extending the provisions of GDL so all drivers under the age of 21 hold a provisional license for a minimum of 12 months would be beneficial.

Unfortunately, **SB 1223** did not make it out of Senate Appropriations by the May 27 deadline. Look for another bill along the same lines to be introduced next year by groups looking to protect inexperienced teen drivers with the education, training and graduated experience of the GDL Program.

For more information, please contact Community Concerns Advocate Shereen Walter at swalter@capta.org.

State and Federal Rules for Accountability Continue to Evolve

*By California State PTA State Board of Education Liaison Patty Scriptor
and California State PTA Federal Advocate Heidi Brewington*

California's approach to measuring and reporting on school performance is changing as both the state's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) move closer to full implementation. Members of the California State PTA Legislation Team provide the latest on how policymakers are working to align and reconcile the state and federal rules for accountability.

State Board Prepares for October Deadline for Creating Measures of School Performance

At its May meeting, the State Board of Education (SBE) continued the historic shift in how California's accountability system will measure school performance. The meeting opened with a summary of Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson's Advisory Task Force's Report on Accountability and Continuous Improvement.

Entitled [*Preparing All Students for College, Career, Life, and Leadership in the 21st Century*](#), the May 2016 report was crafted by a diverse group of stakeholders and calls for an accountability system based on performance, improvement and equity. California State PTA was represented on the Task Force and supports its recommendations.

The Task Force Report helped frame the SBE's conversation on accountability, which lasted more than six hours. The meeting included public testimony from more than 100 stakeholders including California State PTA. At the end of the discussion, the SBE approved a design for the LCFF evaluation rubric based on the following indicators:

- Student test scores on English Language Arts and Math for grades 3-8 and grade 11, including a measure of individual student growth for grades 3-8, when feasible, and results on the Next Generation Science Standards assessment, when available
- Progress of English learners toward English-language proficiency
- High-school graduation rate
- Measures of student engagement, including suspension rates by grade span and chronic absence, when available.

The identified metrics are in alignment with the requirements of ESSA regulations, which enables California to continue to design a single, coherent system of accountability. Additionally, SBE members directed staff to work toward identifying ways to measure school climate, college- and career-readiness, and parent engagement as part of the identified eight state priorities in the LCFF statute.

California State PTA has long supported the move to multiple measures for evaluation and testified in support of expanding the metrics that will be used to evaluate progress and identify schools for intervention and support. We also strongly pushed for transparency and easy access to information for parents and students and were pleased that the board approved moving forward with a top-level summary data display that will enable stakeholders to easily review how their school is doing on all eight LCFF priority areas and see areas where there are significant differences in outcomes for any student subgroup.

The SBE is scheduled to adopt the LCFF rubric by the Oct. 1, 2016, statutory deadline.

The State Board of Education is the key policy-making body for K-12 schools and adopts regulations that implement a wide variety of programs created by the Legislature. The SBE meets five times a year and posts its upcoming agendas at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/>. The agendas can be a good source of information about key education issues and usually include a summary and a recap of previous action along with recommendations.

Patty Scriptor serves as the liaison to the State Board of Education for California State PTA and may be reached at pscriptor@capta.org.

Federal Authorities Working on ESSA Implementation

The focus for advocacy on the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed last December, is now turning to effective implementation of the law. ESSA provides states with a great opportunity to tailor their education systems to meet the needs of their students—including students with disabilities—but this new level of authority is accompanied by the requirement that states work to ensure they close achievement gaps.

The U.S. Department of Education reached a "major milestone" when it released proposed regulations regarding accountability, state plans, and data-reporting provisions of the law. The draft regulations were posted May 31 in the Federal Register and the public has 60 days (until August 1) to provide comments. You can view the posted regulations by going to www.ed.gov/news/fedregister and clicking on the link under "May 31."

With regard to state accountability programs, the proposed regulations would require a summative rating that represents the quality of learning at a school. It can be either a letter grade

or a star grade (i.e., four out of five stars). The rating would include the key state indicators of students' academic progress, plus measures of school quality and school success. The federal law is specific about some of the measures to be used and calls for an emphasis on academic indicators over school quality and student success in accountability reporting.

For general guidance regarding the ESSA transition, the National PTA website provides helpful background for parents. Go to <http://www.pta.org/advocacy/> and click on the Every Student Succeeds Act link. The California Department of Education also provides helpful resources at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/es/>.

For more information, contact Federal Advocate Heidi Brewington at hbrewington@capta.org.

Teacher Evaluation: What Should State Law Seek?

By California State PTA Education Advocate Donna Artukovic

The California Legislature has made a number of attempts to “fix” the teacher-evaluation process. Last year, two major bills were introduced but they did not get through the Legislature. The court also has addressed ways to improve teacher evaluation, tenure and dismissal in *Vergara v. the State of California*. Two years ago, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Rolf Treu ruled that the laws protecting teachers interfered with a student’s right to an equal education. However, in a unanimous decision this April, a three-judge panel of the Second District Court of Appeal rejected this ruling.

The Legislature or the court: Where shall we look for movement on this tricky issue?

Once again this year, the Legislature is chiming in. Assembly Member Susan Bonilla has introduced legislation ([AB 934](#)) that attempts to improve the process of evaluation, tenure and dismissal.

Assembly Member Shirley Weber has also introduced legislation ([AB 2826](#)) aimed at strengthening the teacher-evaluation process. The California State PTA Legislation Action Committee voted to support this bill. The California Teachers Association (CTA) opposed the bill in its early stages, but they are now neutral based on recent amendments.

AB 2826 would not create new requirements school districts must follow. Instead, it is all recommendations – ones that will be codified in law if the bill passes all the hurdles ahead and the governor signs it. The bill *authorizes* and *encourages* districts to evaluate teachers using specific measures in three general areas: progress of pupils, instructional strategies and adherence to curricular objectives:

- Under “progress of pupils,” the bill suggests the use of multiple measures such as state tests, pre-test and post-test data, A-G coursework, portfolios, performances, surveys from parents and pupils, and classroom observations
- Teacher evaluation measures based on “instructional strategies” could include how well the teacher engages and supports all students, designs instruction and uses assessments to inform and improve learning
- “Adherence to curricular objectives” could include a teacher’s understanding and organizing of subject matter for learning, and developing as a professional educator.

So why author a bill that is merely suggestions? Assembly Member Weber believes that one of the most pressing challenges with the current evaluation system is how to use measures of student learning to evaluate teachers. Although current law requires the consideration of pupil progress in an evaluation, schools continue to struggle with what measures to use and how to employ them. As a result of this confusion, a majority of California's districts do not include any data from state or local tests in the evaluation of teachers. This bill explicitly authorizes and encourages districts to use these measures.

As of early June, **AB 2826** has passed the Assembly and will next be heard before the Senate Education Committee.

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

School Climate: What It Means and Why It Matters

By California State PTA Education Advocate Donna Artukovic

California school districts must establish goals and actions in eight priority areas as part of their Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs). One of those eight priorities is school climate. A positive school climate is emerging as an issue which legislators, school-board members, school personnel, teachers, parents and students recognize as an essential element in the education of children.

School climate often is defined as the quality and character of school life that creates the conditions for learning. More than 20 years of research indicates that a positive school climate is directly related to achievement and may be one of the most dominant predictors of achievement. Research also shows that a positive school climate increases teacher retention, decreases the dropout rate and decreases incidences of violence. Common sense also tells us that students who feel safe and valued are more likely to learn well.

According to the National School Climate Center, there are four essential dimensions of school climate, at least from a student's point of view:

- Safety – “Do I feel safe? Are teachers on my side?”
- Teaching and Learning -- “Do my teachers encourage me to try new ideas and think independently?”
- Interpersonal Relationships – “Is there respect for diversity and support from adults?”
- Institutional Environment – “Do I feel connected to my school? Do I belong here?”

The U.S. Department of Education recommends school-climate reform as an evidence-based strategy to prevent school violence. The DOE has developed a new School Climate Survey that is available free on its website. This survey measures three areas (engagement, safety and environment) and is available in versions for parents, students, teachers and other school personnel.

At the April meeting of the California State PTA Legislation Action Committee (LAC), we considered three bills that attempt to help schools improve school climate. In the case of two of the bills, **AB 2698** (Weber) and **AB 2443** (Baker), the LAC took “watch” positions based on their interactions with the existing LCAP process. The LAC took a “support” position on **AB 2527** (Weber):

- [AB 2698](#) (Weber) would require high-need, low-achieving schools to do a school-climate assessment. The results would be published and the outcomes shared with pupils, parents, teachers and school personnel, and resulting improvement recommendations would need to be implemented. The bill also requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to convene an advisory committee to make recommendations regarding improving school climate. This bill passed the Assembly and will be heard in the Senate Education Committee sometime this summer.
- [AB 2443](#) (Baker) would add reporting on the number of practicing psychologists and counselors working on school climate issues to the set of requirements in the LCAP. The fifth state priority required in the LCAP is school climate, which currently is to be measured by suspension and expulsion rates, and by other measures such as surveys. This bill passed the Assembly Education Committee but did not make it out of suspense, so it has died.
- [AB 2527](#) (Weber) requires the superintendent of public instruction (SPI) to establish an advisory committee for the creation of a model school climate survey aligned with the LCAP priorities. The SPI would recommend the model survey to the State Board of Education (SBE) for adoption. Model surveys would then be made available to school districts. Although school districts are supposed to do a climate survey, very few do. This bill provided a means for helping them to follow through. This bill was not approved by the Assembly Education Committee.

A number of additional bills before the Legislature deal with school climate issues such as bullying, sexual harassment, youth on probation, LGBTQ pupils, mental-health intervention, character education, English-language learners, suicide and teen dating. PTA advocates are keeping a close watch on these bills for future consideration.

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

PTA-Supported Education Bills Gain Traction

By California State PTA Education Advocate Carol Kocivar

Several PTA-supported education bills are scheduled to be heard in the Senate after garnering support in the Assembly, including:

- [AB 1557](#) (Mathis) School Facilities Use by Recreational Youth Sports Leagues. This bill addresses the issue of the high costs for a recreational youth sports league to use school facilities. This bill makes it clear that a recreational youth sports league that charges participants a nominal fee--an average of no more than \$60 per month—would be assessed *direct costs* rather than *fair rental value* for the use of school facilities. According to the author, "Non-profit after-school programs have been closing their doors due to the over burdensome costs of renting school facilities - some schools charging up to \$3,000 per use of their field."
- [AB 2306](#) (Frazier) Juvenile Court School Pupils. This bill is designed to help juvenile court schools' students graduate from high school. Students who transfer from a juvenile court school to a school district -- after completing the 10th grade -- would be exempt from local graduation requirements in excess of those required by the state. It also allows these students to earn a high-school diploma while in juvenile court school if they meet state

graduation requirements. Current law already provides this exemption to students in foster care and to homeless youth.

- **[AB 2615](#)** (Wood) After-School Programs. Sponsored by the superintendent of public instruction, this bill addresses the issue of a fair geographic distribution of expanded learning funds. According to the California Department of Education, the federal government requires states to distribute funds equitably among geographic areas within the state, including urban and rural communities. This bill divides the state into three regions to better meet those federal requirements for the distribution of 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) and After-School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) Program funds.

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

Children's Health Is a Topic of State and Federal Bills

*By California State PTA Health Advocate Kathy Rabun
and California State PTA Federal Advocate Heidi Brewington*

In both its state and federal advocacy efforts, PTA supports legislation that seeks to improve the health and safety of children.

Measures Supported by the California State PTA

At its May meeting, the California State PTA Legislative Action Committee took a "support" position on a variety of bills related to children's-health issues. These bills all have passed the Assembly and will be heard by the state Senate:

- **[AB 1783](#)** (Dodd) would require school districts to develop and implement a plan to inspect the contents of school classrooms and school equipment for earthquake safety, and to take corrective actions where necessary. This bill has passed the Assembly and will be heard by the Senate.
- **[AB 1808](#)** (Wood) would permit trainees working under the supervision of Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs) or Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (LPCCs) to treat a minor under the same limited terms and conditions as interns. Trainees must be enrolled in a master or doctoral program and must have completed at least 12 semester units in the postgraduate degree program. Under current law, certain mental-health providers can provide services to a minor 12 years or older. This bill has passed the Assembly and will be heard by the Senate.
- **[AB 2004](#)** (Bloom) would require health-care service plans or health-insurance policies to include coverage for hearing aids for children under 18 years of age. The author argues that a child's ability to hear should not be determined based on family income but should be viewed as a fundamental right, especially when the state has a mandated hearing screening program; to diagnose deafness and then fail to provide intervention is morally and ethically unacceptable. This bill has passed the Assembly and will be heard by the Senate.
- **[AB 2054](#)** (Thurmond) would prepare California to implement Summer Electronic Benefits for Children (SEBTC), which provides nutrition assistance for the purchase of groceries

when school is out of session and many children lose access to school meals. Federal lawmakers have expanded – and are poised to further expand -- authority and funding for states to operate SEBTC. This bill ensures that California seizes these opportunities to better support children in need.

- [AB 2124](#) (E. Garcia) would create a \$10-million grant program to improve access and the quality of drinking water in California schools. The grants would be awarded for, but not limited to, projects such as water fountains, water-bottle filling stations, installation or replacements of drinking water fountain devices that are capable of removing contaminants, and the installation of point-of-entry treatment devices and plumbing repairs that improve water quality. Today, at least 25 percent of California schools do not provide free, fresh drinking water to students at meal times every day, despite state and federal laws that require it.

For more information, contact Health Advocate Kathy Rabun at krabun@capta.org.

Federal Nutrition Bill Raises Concerns

The House Education and The Workforce Committee recently voted 20 - 14 in favor of an amended version of [H.R.5003](#): Improving Child Nutrition and Education Act of 2016, a bill that would reauthorize The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act.

National PTA opposed this amended version of the bill since some of its provisions roll back years of progress towards healthy and nutritious school meals.

In 2010, when federal lawmakers first passed The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA), the bill sought to improve the nutritional value of all foods and beverages sold in schools, and required a school lunch to include a fruit or a vegetable, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. Limits also were set on calories, fats, sodium and sugar content. To date, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture report, 98.5 percent of schools successfully met the updated nutrition standards. PTA helped to further these efforts through activities such as its *Healthy Lifestyles* program.

The amended bill just passed by the committee rolls back these provisions allowing popular foods in certain regions of the U.S. (such as biscuits, grits, white rice, etc.) to be exempt from the whole-grain requirements as well as delaying the implementation of sodium reduction targets in school meals. PTA opposed these and other provisions in the amended version. At this time it is not clear when or if the bill will go the House floor; however, we will certainly keep you updated on its progress.

For more information regarding key federal legislation, visit the [National PTA](#) website, click on Advocacy and then click on “Key Legislation.”

For more information, contact Federal Advocate Heidi Brewington at hbrewington@capta.org.

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