

ADVOCACY INSIDER

May 20, 2020



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THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP OUR SCHOOLS

Education advocates are urging the Governor to protect school funding in the midst of massive state budget deficits, and taking it a step further by asking our federal representatives to include schools in the next COVID-19 relief package.

Here are three things YOU can do to help our schools:

- **Contact your state representatives.** Contact your elected state representatives and let them know what the impact of the Governor's proposed budget will be on your school. To find your representatives, [click here](#).
- **Advocate for more federal funding.** Right now, contact your federal representatives and ask them to support an additional [\\$200 billion](#) in federal funds for schools. Unless Congress acts, schools will experience major budget cuts triggered by the pandemic. [Click here](#) to send a message to your federal representatives.
- **Help pass the [Schools and Communities First](#) initiative, which is on the November ballot.** This could raise about \$11.5 billion each year for our schools and communities. [Click here](#) to volunteer.

TAKE ACTION

THE 2020 CENSUS: WHY PARTICIPATE?

California has a census response rate as of May 11th of only 59.8%. For those who have not responded online to the Census, door-to-door census-taking will take place from May 27-August 14.

The 2020 Census will determine how many congressional representatives each state gets, affect hundreds of billions in federal funding every year, and provide data that will impact communities for the next decade.

United States
Census
2020

Census data informs planning and funding for education, school lunches, highway construction, public transit systems, employment and training, hospitals, clinics, community mental health services, healthcare and much, much more.

The census questionnaire is quick and easy. It takes only about 10 minutes to complete and is safe, secure and confidential. Go to <https://my2020census.gov> to fill out your 2020 Census form today!

For more information about why the Census is so important, visit the [Census page](#) of the California State PTA website.

PTA SUPPORTS SB 855

California State PTA has a support position on [SB 855 Wiener](#). This bill requires insurance companies to provide additional care to individuals and children suffering from mental health or substance abuse issues. It also expands the criteria for what mental health issues are covered under health insurance policies.

This bill would require a health care service plan contract that provides hospital, medical, or surgical coverage to provide coverage for the diagnosis and for the **medically necessary treatment** of mental health and substance use disorders under the same terms and conditions applied to other medical conditions. The bill would prohibit a health care service plan or health disability insurer from limiting benefits or coverage for chronic or pervasive mental health and substance use disorders to short-term or acute treatment. The bill would revise the covered benefits to include basic health care services, intermediate services, and prescription drugs.

Historically insurance plans have not covered many services for mental health (MH) and substance use disorders (SUD). Many times, patients were covered for acute hospitalization but no other type of MD/SUD services. Under SB 855, MH/SUD services are defined as “medically necessary treatment”. MH/SUD are treated as covered services that align with what is recommended by the treating provider, to meet the patient’s comprehensive needs, and consistent with generally accepted standards of practice. What this means is, if your child or youth needs treatment prescribed by a physician, the insurance must cover the treatment as long as it is within the accepted standard of care.

This bill also prohibits limiting benefits or coverage for chronic conditions to short-term or acute treatment.

Part of our legislation platform calls for measures to extend and improve physical and mental health services and facilities, including rehabilitation to children and youth. We took a support position on this bill because we believe it will result in a significant improvement of mental health services for California's youth.

SB 855 is being heard in the Senate Health committee this month, which seems especially appropriate as May is Mental Health Awareness month. Use these links for more information and support for MH/SUD issues.

<https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Mental-Health-Month>

<https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/substance-use/drugs/index.html>

For a list of other bills that California State PTA has taken a position on and that are still active in this unusual legislative session, please see our [blog entry here](#).

MONTHLY ADVOCACY WEBINAR SCHEDULE FOR SUMMER 2020

The Legislation team has been holding monthly webinars packed with the latest information on what is happening in Sacramento, Washington DC and around the country that impacts our schools, children and families.

Our survey results told us that you wanted us to continue these webinars through the summer months, so here is the schedule of upcoming webinars:

- **Wednesday, June 3, 7:00-8:00 p.m.**



- Wednesday, July 1, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, August 4, 7:00-8:00 p.m.

To register for any of these webinars, click here and select the relevant date:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/2338789182473643275>

To watch a recording of the May 6th webinar, [click here](#). To download a copy of the Power point presentation, [click here](#).

TAKE ACTION!

Visit the New Resource Library



Find science learning activities you can do at home - and much more - in our new Resource Library!

[BROWSE NOW](#)

Translate Your Message With Ease on TOTEM



TOTEM's messaging module now lets you translate outgoing messages into other languages instantly!

[WATCH VIDEO DEMO](#)

Spring 2020 Member Perks



The spring edition includes offers that can help families who are trying to save money during the pandemic.

[READ MORE](#)

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