

February 27-28

Fourth District PTA brought 65 parent and community volunteers to Sacramento to learn about and practice direct advocacy with our state's elected officials. Speaker presentations took place at hotel conference facilities and in the Legislative Office Building, and then *Safari* attendees personally met with legislators and staff in their Capitol offices to discuss key points from our legislative agenda, focusing on these priorities:



- *California needs to improve teacher recruitment, training, support, and retention. We asked lawmakers to support legislation that provides solutions to these critical challenges.*
- *Our state must secure adequate and stable funding for public education. We urged legislators to develop a long-term plan to address California's public school funding system.*

Our speakers were engaging, informative, and inspirational. Participants came away with great knowledge to share and empowered to speak up for kids! Here is a review of presentations from our guest speakers, courtesy of our advocacy team notetakers: Shanin Ziemer, Jan Campbell, Gisela Meier, Vivien Moreno, and Donna Artukovic.

Ron Bennett – School Services of California – CEO

This was a financially difficult year. Districts must produce a four-year budget projection and are required to use the governor's budget estimate as the basis for it. Most years, the governor estimates high and the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) estimates low, but this year it is the opposite. The budget estimates in January are down from the June forecasts, so districts are scrambling to lower their budgets.

Half of our state's income tax is paid by the top 1%, and since their income is down, the state budget is also down. "50% of our state residents pay no tax, but they are poor, not lucky."

We are looking at a budget cut for the first time since the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) was rolled out. Education will get a 1.48% increase, but it will cost districts more than that due to step-in-column (contractual annual raises), cost of living adjustments (COLA), increased insurance costs, and increased contributions to retirement funds.

Employer contributions to the California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS) and the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS)

will more than double in the next seven years from 8¼% to 19.1% by 2020-21!

"California spends more on every public commodity than any other state, except on education."

– Ron Bennett

There is discussion of adding Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA, or Special Ed) into the LCFF funds. [SELPA's are service areas for special education; a region might be a group of many small districts

or a large single district, but each region must be of sufficient size and scope to provide the full continuum of services for children and youth residing within the region boundaries.] This would lead to underfunding of special education, and the ability to blame it on choices districts make rather than the state underfunding. Many smaller districts partner into SELPAs to offer more services and programs that they couldn't offer alone. Combining these funds into LCFF could also lead to a loss of federal monies.

When talking to legislators about funding, "Ask if they are satisfied with the last 40 years of being below the national average and if they would be good with another 10 like that."

John Fensterwald – EdSource Today – Editor-At-Large

John Fensterwald is Editor-At-Large of *EdSource Today*, an online daily subscription service with eight reporters covering education issues, with three of them in Southern California.

Starting in 2010, California began a transformation of its education system. Jerry Brown was rebelling against No Child Left Behind. We put in place new standards, new testing, a new funding mechanism (LCFF combined with Prop 30 and then Prop 55), new accountability system (multiple measures).

NCLB/ESSA – No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has updated and is now the Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA). This took away a lot of the federal government's powers and gave more to the states.

Common Core—Strong support, will not be repealed. During the first round of testing in 2016, 37% of students met or exceeded math standards, and 49% met or exceeded standards in English. Good for the first year out, and we expect it to rise.

When surveyed, principals and administrators believe their teachers to be well prepared, but teachers want more professional development on CCSS. Teachers say they haven't been properly trained, and they have poor textbook choices, no guidance. It may be 2020 before teachers are fully prepared.

Teacher Shortage—A serious issue. No subs; no trained special ed teachers; need STEM teachers. Yet with the current budget issues districts are facing, many will be handing out pink slips on March 15 for the first time in years.

LCFF— Four years in, California is 95% of the way back to where we were in 2007, which represents the "full funding" goal. Parents should be asking, "What did we get?". Expect flat funding for next year. With rise in pension and special ed costs, there are signs of budget cuts in many districts. CALSTRS and CALPERS are making huge encroachments on school district budgets.

The teacher shortage is a serious issue...Yet with the current budget issues districts are facing, many will be handing out pink slips on March 15 for the first time in years.

– John Fensterwald, EdSource Today

LCAP– Great variations among districts whether they are meeting the spirit and letter of the law; some signs of parent engagement, innovation, and improvement, but it’s not everywhere.

“There is a burden on parents to keep track and be involved with your Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs)!” Sacramento no longer has much control or oversight.

The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) will be working with troubled schools and districts to help them improve. The Legislature created the CCEE to provide “advice and assistance” to county offices of education, school districts, and charter schools in achieving their LCAP goals. A team of experts will come help, not a state takeover like previously.

School Accountability—The new Dashboard has replaced the API score and involves multiple measures of school success. Includes performance in English, Math, English Language Learners, High School Graduation rate, Attendance, Suspensions, College and Career prep; rating system will be color and pie-graph coded (where red is bad, to orange, yellow, green, and blue is best), incorporating performance and improvement levels in each area. The information provided should be used in the LCAP process.

Questions that remain:

- What will the May revised be like? Better? Worse?
- What will be done about the teacher shortage?
- What will be the parent’s response to the new Dashboard?
- Will districts embrace continuous improvement?
- What will be done about change-adverse districts?
- Is local control funding working?
- Who will help districts/schools who need it?
- Will the State Board’s new plan for Every Student Succeeds Act provide direction and leadership?
- Will LCFF survive after Jerry Brown leaves office?
- What about items that are not funded, such as Early Childhood Education?

Trump unknowns:

- 20 billion voucher plan?
- Title 1 diversion?
- Increase of \$54 billion in defense spending?
- Cuts to Head Start?
- Elimination of Obama Care? Cuts to MediCal?
- Mass deportations? Split families? Fear of sending children to school? Status of dreamers?

[Ken Kappahn – Legislative Analyst’s Office – Senior Fiscal and Policy Analyst](#)

Background on the Budget and School Funding

- The General Fund, the state’s main operating account, receives most of the state’s tax revenue and pays for most major programs, including education.
- In the 2016-17 fiscal year, the General Fund has about \$119 billion, with 70 percent coming from personal income taxes (their volatility can cause significant fluctuations in the state budget).

- The biggest portion of the General Fund goes to K-12 education. If you add in funding for universities and community colleges, education takes up more than half of the General Fund.
- Each year the “minimum guarantee” established by Prop. 98 is the higher of the following:
 - The total state and local funding in the prior year, adjusted for enrollment and an inflation factor (usually positive).
 - About 40 percent of the General Fund.
- Prop. 98 was supposed to set a floor for education funding, not a ceiling. In practice, the state has funded education close to the minimum level most years.
- Prop. 98 does not insulate schools from budget volatility. The minimum guarantee can drop quickly during recessions and grow quickly during recoveries.
- Previously, the state told school districts how to spend most of the money they received. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), adopted in 2013:
 - Gave school boards more control over their budgets.
 - Created new requirements for parent and community involvement.
 - Weighted school funding toward school districts serving relatively high numbers of low-income students and English learners.
- Under LCFF every school district has a funding target based on:
 - The number of students enrolled
 - Student grade levels (more funding for K-3 and 9-12)
 - Share of students who are low-income, foster youth, or English learners
- Some districts have higher targets than others.
- Because the state didn’t have enough money to give to districts, full implementation of LCFF is still in transition.

Governor’s January Budget Proposal

- The Governor’s budget identifies a \$1.5 billion shortfall, due to tax revenue growth that is slower than expected and Medi-Cal costs that are higher than expected.
- Proposals to address that shortfall affect many areas of the budget, including education.
- The Prop. 98 minimum guarantee has dropped due to lower than expected growth in revenue.
- The Governor proposes to delay a payment of \$859 million from the end of this year to the beginning of next year. This allows the state to move costs from this year, when the budget is tighter, to next year, when the budget is less tight.
- Although the Governor’s proposal would decrease funding for the current year, school funding is expected to increase by \$2.1 billion in 2017-18.
- For 2017-18, the Governor proposes to repay the \$859 million taken from the current year and add \$744 million for LCFF (a 1.5 percent increase for the average district).
- The Governor proposes a one-time payment of about \$50 per student (\$287 million statewide) which districts could use for any local priority.
- The Governor also proposes \$200 million statewide for competitive grants to fund Career Technical Education.

LAO’s Assessment of the Governor’s Proposed Budget

- The Governor’s estimate for 2016-17 seems reasonable, according to the LAO.
- The estimate for 2017-18 seems too low. Personal income tax revenues (which account for 70 percent of the budget) should increase as the economy continues to grow. By May there could be several billion more in revenues.
- Higher revenues would increase the Prop. 98 minimum guarantee for 2017-18.

- A revenue increase of \$2 billion would increase school funding by about \$500 million (average of \$85 per student).
- A revenue increase of \$4 billion would increase school funding by about \$1.5 billion (average of \$250 per student).
- School districts should start thinking about how they would use the additional funding.
- The Governor will issue a revised proposed budget in May (the “May revise”).

Hot Topics in Education: Prop. 51 (\$9 School Facilities Bond)

- Authorizes \$7 billion for K-12 school facilities:
 - \$3 billion for new facilities.
 - \$3 billion for renovations.
 - \$ 1 billion split between career technical education and charter schools.
- \$2 billion goes to community college facilities.
- The state sells bonds to investors, gives grants to school districts and pays back the bonds with interest.
- School districts have to go through a lengthy state approval process.
- Projects are funded on a first-come, first-served basis
- Districts have to provide local matching funds – 50 percent for new facilities and 40 percent for renovations.

Hot Topics: Prop. 55 (Income Tax Extension)

- In 2012, voters approved Prop. 30, which increased taxes for high-income earners. Prop. 55 extended that increase through 2030.
- First call on funding:
 - Schools and community colleges (about half)
 - Building reserves and paying down debt (amount depends on stock market and other factors)
- Second call on funding: State Medi-Cal program (up to \$2 billion)
- Any remaining funding frees up money the state can allocate for any purpose.
- Prop. 55 will increase K-12 funding by about \$300 per student in 2018-19, up to about \$500 per student by 2019-20.
- School funding will still be volatile due to changes in the economy.

District contributions to the [pension] system will increase from 8.25% of each teacher’s salary before 2014 to 19.1% in 2020-21.
 –Ken Kappahn, LAO

Hot Topics: School District Pension Costs

- Teachers and other school employees receive pensions from the state when they retire. The amount is determined by final salary, years of service and age at retirement.
- Pensions are funded by school districts, teachers, and the state.
- Payments into the system have not been large enough to cover the benefits earned to date, so the system has a large “unfunded liability.”
- Recent state actions to address the unfunded liability:
 - Benefits were reduced for teachers hired after 2012.
 - Beginning in 2014-15, contributions from teachers, districts and the state increase over a seven-year period.

- District contributions to the system will increase from 8.25 percent of each teacher's salary before 2014 to 19.1 percent in 2020-21. Rates for non-teaching employees are also rising.
- Annual district pension costs will increase about \$6.4 billion over the seven-year period.
- The LAO estimates that school funding could grow between \$17 billion and \$22 billion from 2013-14 to 2020-21. Pension costs will increase by about \$6.4 billion over the same period. Higher pension costs could account for 30 to 40 percent of additional school funding.
- School districts with more low-income students will get larger LCFF increases. They will have to balance requirements to increase or improve services to students with the requirement to cover pension costs.
- Districts with fewer low-income students will get lower LCFF increases and may have to redirect existing resources to cover higher pension costs.

Hot Topics: New Accountability System

- The state's new accountability system, adopted in 2013 along with LCFF, established eight state priority areas for education:
 1. Student achievement
 2. Student engagement
 3. Other student outcomes
 4. Course access
 5. School climate
 6. Basic skills
 7. Implementation of state academic standards
 8. Parent engagement
- The system included performance measures. For example, performance on standardized tests is one measure of student achievement and the high school graduation rate is one measure of student engagement.
- Each school district must develop a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) containing district goals and actions to improve in the eight state priority areas. The LCAP must be developed in consultation with teachers, students, and parents.
- The state Board of Education has been developing rubrics – statewide performance expectations for each priority area. The rubrics will determine whether a district receives support and intervention, and will also inform communities how well their districts are doing in each of the priority areas.
- A new “Dashboard” will let parents and students see how their districts are doing; it is posted on the California Department of Education website at cde.ca.gov/dashboard.

[Debbie Look – Assembly Education Committee – Senior Consultant](#)

There are several bills that look to address the teacher shortage through various methods including:

- grants towards student loan repayment,
- housing grants, the teacher re-credentialing of military spouses,
- prohibiting charging teachers for induction (training new first year teachers take after credentialing),
- a STEM teacher pathway from industry, and
- helping internationally credentialed teachers.

The governor is looking at changing the way special education is funded and there are bills addressing special education funding and SELPAs. Should it be included in LCFF?

The Pre-K funding promise was paused due to the weakening economy.

There are several bills addressing school climate issues:

- police interactions (police should be involved only in criminal matters not school discipline),
- detentions/suspensions,
- suicide prevention,
- school safety plans, and
- cyber bullying.

There are bills to address the federal issues with immigration that would prohibit discrimination based on residency status, prohibit collection of status data, and prohibit Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents on campus. “We want schools to be safe havens.” Students are scared they will go to school and return home to find their parents gone.

The governor wants more oversight on the school facilities bond with more audits. There are bills to streamline the approval process applying for matching funds and to have less duplication of efforts (e.g. only submitting certain items to one place instead of several and allowing e-plans instead of paper).

When you meet with your legislators, tell your story with specific examples of what’s happening in your school. And don’t forget that even at full funding of LCFF, it’s not adequate funding!

*–Debbie Look,
Senate Ed. Comm. Consultant*

There is a very high level of uncertainty as to what will happen at the federal level with education, so many plans are on hold, waiting to see. ESSA plans are due to the federal government by September 2017 but the laws may be reinterpreted. We are working to follow the law as written to meet requirements.

Though the federal government has withdrawn the protections for LGBTQ students, our state has its own law to protect them.

School vouchers loom large in the future, but would require an act of congress, not just a presidential or agency action. There are federal bills proposed to remove standards for school meals.

The education committees in the state assembly and senate are smaller than in the past. With LCFF there isn’t as much to do at the state level.

Measuring school climate is challenging as there are no specific tests. We can look at drop-out rates, graduation rates, and suspensions, but must rely on locally developed measures. Student surveys play a big part.

School librarians are very important, and do much more than a library technician. They teach kids how to do research in a library and students are often lacking this knowledge when they enter college now. But the librarians are long gone and many teachers don’t even realize their value because they’ve never had them. It’s a hard message to push forward.

When you meet with your legislators, tell your story with specific examples of what’s happening in your school. And don’t forget that even at full funding of LCFF, it’s not adequate funding!

California State PTA Executive/Legislation Team Panel Overview and Q&A

Fourth District PTA invited the CAPTA President, President-Elect, and the entire Leg Team to participate in this panel:

- President-Elect Dianna MacDonald
- Community Concerns Advocate Shereen Walter
- District President Representative Beverly Berryman
- Education Advocate Donna Artukovic
- Family Engagement Advocate Lea Darrah
- Health Advocate Kathy Rabun
- State Initiatives Lead Barbara Inatsugu
- Director of Legislation Shayne Silva
- District President Representative Shelia Anderson
- Education Advocate Carol Kocivar
- Education Advocate Cecelia Mansfield
- Federal Advocate Heidi Brewington
- State Board of Education Liaison Patty Scripter
- Student Board Member Ella Smith

The CAPTA executive legislation team answers a few questions:

What is the CAPTA legislative committee?

The 13-person panel looks at around 4,000 bills each year proposed by California lawmakers. After determining which bills directly affect children, they then split the bills into categories with an advocate responsible for each subject area. The CAPTA Legislative Advocate researches their bills and shares with other representatives if the PTA has the authority to place a position on the bill. In a series of meetings, the committee member presents appropriate bills to the legislative panel and they vote on positions concerning the bills. State Legislators not only want PTA approval on a bill, but they often ask for CAPTA advocates to testify on behalf of their bill at committee hearings.

CAPTA President-elect Diana MacDonald explained that PTA's founding principles support adequate laws protecting all children; sometimes PTA even works to create them.

Shayne Silva, the Director of Legislation, commented that the authority process is possible using the resolutions that PTA passes at state and national levels. Resolutions and positions are presented at unit levels, submitted through channels, and voted on at the yearly business meetings of PTA (Conventions). After the Legislature committee spiritedly discusses a bill, they vote to support, watch, seek amendments, or oppose the bill.

Carol Kocivar, Education Advocate (and past President of CAPTA) explained that after PTA takes a position, the committee member sends a formal letter to the legislative author of the bill. CAPTA advocates send requested information to and testify before the state's hearing committees, communicating the official PTA position on the bill. (Membership counts! State representatives hold PTA opinion in esteem because they understand that we represent so many members. As the largest and one of the strongest PTA districts, Fourth District represents almost 120,000 members.)

Shereen Walter, Community Concerns Advocate, brought home the concept of how all the Legislative Committee's work applies at the unit level. The PTA Legislative Committee asks units for information on proposed student and family programs, or even problems families face daily, that legislation proposes to solve. It is only through this continuous effort that the LCAP (Local Control Accountability Plan) still includes a strong parent voice as it continues to change in form. PTA membership, letters, and advocate voices show the state legislators that PTA is filled with actively voting people. The advocates have about a month to sort through the bills and determine if they are applicable to directly influencing children.

CAPTA President Justine Fischer, reminded advocates about the CAPTA on-line and human resources for our parent and teacher members. The LCFF/LCAP handout educates members in the ways to keep parents' voices in every step of the LCAP process, and can help shape each district's own unique brand of parent engagement best practices.

Lea Darrah, Family Engagement Advocate, emphasized PTA relevance by reminding everyone that the PTA reaction to the *Morgan Hill* case to protect our children's privacy shook up the Governor, the legislative bodies, and the CDE (department of education). This had nothing to do with raising funds, and they all saw how quickly PTA utilized their communication methods to get information out directly to parents and help galvanize them to respond to protect their children. Other parent groups participated, but PTA stood out as an articulate advocate for all the state's children and the ability to pull the massive response in so short a time. It made the CDE, the legislators, and the Governor renew their appreciation for PTA.

Membership counts! State representatives hold PTA opinion in esteem because they understand that we represent so many members.

—Carol Kocivar

Student Board Member Ella Smith expressed that the legislative team, along with her early engagement with PTA, inspired her to follow her dreams and that she hopes that PTA will always mentor and fight for children to be able to follow their passions.

Barbara Inatsugu, who is responsible for following state initiatives, said campaigns continue to want PTA support and tend to shy away from the opposition of PTA. PTA supported initiatives 51, 55, 56, 58, and 63 in the 2016 election, and they all passed.

State Board of Education Liaison Patty Scripter brings the parent perspective to Sacramento – directly to department of education – by sitting on CDE committees concerning LCAP evolution and the creation of the new rubric of the Dashboard.

Kathy Rabun, Health Advocate and Heidi Brewington, the Federal Advocate closely follow the federal response to healthcare. Recent medical expansion has strongly impacted California's kids, and with possible federal cuts, the state would most likely cut or flat-line education funding in order to supply health care for children. Heidi reinforced that CAPTA will stand behind the national PTA platform and recent statements by disagreeing with the federal stance supporting removal of IDEA funding, supporting vouchers, and cutting health services.

Donna Artukovic, Education Advocate, stated that many current bills are addressing the teacher shortage. Not all districts are feeling the shortfall yet, but less wealthy districts already feel the pinch, particularly in the areas of bilingual education, science, math, and special education, as well as with the unavailability of substitute teachers.

Diana shared a Sacramento perspective on PTA relevance: Senator Mike McGuire (Dist. 2) noted that PTA is one of the best and most powerful advocates in Sacramento because all legislators know that PTA is not paid, and we all have the same goal – no matter the individual circumstances of time or economic situations. PTA advocates for children, and we have a history of fighting for bettering all children lives.

Carol emphasized that as education in California changes, we must change how we advocate for funding and programs. Do not compare California spending to the rest of the nation; instead, share personal stories that relate to a concrete purchase that LCFF base funding cannot cover at current levels – not sweeping overall funding statements.

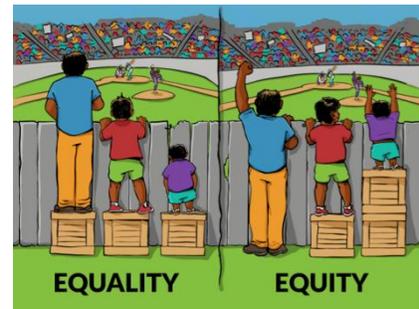
Shayne agreed that sharing your personal experience with public education is still powerful and the best way to emphasize that we still need additional education revenues.

Advocate to work toward building capacity for parent engagement with positive solutions, and push for input before decisions are made. Above all, keep at it – in other words, *try, try again*.

Ryan Smith – Education Trust-West – Executive Director

Here are some highlights from points made by our inspiration keynote dinner speaker, who talked about, “Why Equity and Family Engagement Matters – How to build a bridge from talk to action”:

- The most important work we do is parent engagement.
- Every group needs an angelic troublemaker!
- Ed Trust West is dedicated to closing the achievement gap.
- The California Equity Leadership Alliance (CELA) is a collaboration of several of the leaders in education issues in our state working together to address equity issues. “Equity is the new buzzword. Like coconut water was. Everyone is hearing about it, but not everyone is drinking it.”
- We have seen an increase in high school graduation rates for minorities, but still not in college graduation rates. In the last four years, 95% of the economic advances have gone to the top 1%!
- “We need PTA leadership now more than ever!” A meta-analysis of 21 studies on family engagement found that it is a strong predictor of student success. “We will do what’s right on behalf of the communities we are in.”
- There is a narrative that some parents don’t care – they are too busy or otherwise occupied – **This is not true! All parents care.**
- The intersection of parent engagement and equity is what matters.
- Young African Americans have a 68% chance of being incarcerated if they do not graduate from high school.
- Education is the most important and quickest way out of poverty.
- Family engagement is a predictor of success in school.
- The positive effect of family engagement is overwhelming.
- Suggested reading:
 - Joyce Epstein: *School, Family, and Community Partnerships*
 - Anne Henderson: *Beyond the Bake Sale*
- Parents and schools should be partners.
- The primary responsibility for building partnerships rests with the school.
- May the Fourth be with you!



Education is the most important and quickest way out of poverty. Family engagement is a predictor of success in school.
 –Ryan Smith

NEWLY-ELECTED LEGISLATORS

Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva

Sharon Quirk-Silva was re-elected (after a two-year hiatus) to the 65th District. She is a resident of Fullerton, a teacher for over 30 years, and a former mayor. She believes that parent contributions transform the education process into a collaborative effort, making a more positive outcome for all our kids.

Currently on the Higher Education committee, Assemblymember Quirk-Silva is concerned with increased student fees and the availability of programs for students not on the four-year university pathway. She works to build and strengthen career/technical education programs that directly impact career connections locally.

Her goal is to make graduating seniors aware of their options at community college, private apprenticeship schools, and beginning-level jobs skills. She focuses on solving skill gaps that match high school and community college students to local industry and business sector needs, particularly in the areas of plumbing, wood-working, and automotive technicians.

Regarding the teacher shortage, Assemblymember Quirk-Silva emphasized making sure that high quality teachers fill needed positions, and that no additional cost or training burdens are added unnecessarily. She is looking to support all teachers from social media abuse. She strongly supports public education and stands behind improving all schools through school choice. She does not believe that vouchers or tax credits help most people gain a better education, and is demanding greater transparency from charter schools.

Senator Josh Newman

- Elected November 2016, in a very close election.
- Represents the 29th District – Brea, La Habra, Fullerton, Buena Park, La Palma, Cypress, Stanton
- Our legislature runs on a two-year bill cycle and each legislator is allowed to introduce up to 40 bills per cycle. That means there are about 800 senate bills and 2000 assembly bills! And all of the bills are competing with education for funding.
- Committed to public education, affordable college, and students graduating debt-free.
- We must invest more fully in education.
- Many areas in the state competing for same pot of money.
- Term limits has led to wanting to look at shorter-term objectives. Spending money on a 4th-grader today is a long-term investment that won't pay off until this entire legislature is gone. We need to hold our legislators accountable.
- Governor Brown is a fiscal conservative, so he tends to underfund things.
- The biggest challenge facing education in the next few years is that education doesn't have leverage – education advocates don't contribute to campaigns, and spending money on education is a long-term investment. The "value" of an education is hard for some to quantify.
- Senator Newman stated that most legislation brought forth comes from a third party, not the actual legislator.

- A newly-elected legislator needs lots of help. Staff is very important and a valuable resource.
- Senator Newman suggested that when you advocate, ask your legislator directly if they are supportive of your position.
- Following a meeting in Sacramento, it's very important to follow-up in your district with the local staff person and establish a relationship with them.

Assemblyman Dr. Steven S. Choi

- Assemblyman Choi represents the 68th District, serves on the Higher Education Committee.
- He has a PhD in Library and Information Science and realizes the value of libraries to the community. Libraries can serve as a community center, center of learning, and cultural center. Library use is increasing. He would like to see a Great Park Central Library and Cultural Center.
- Quotes:
 - "As a legislator, my time is literally not my own time."
 - "It is an enjoyable thing to make improvements."
 - "Everything should boil down to local issues."
- Higher education affordability is a big issue. And living on campus costs more than tuition. The assembly has no control over the CSU & UC admissions, which is decided by the Boards of Regents.
- Charter schools are good if the school district approves of them.

Assemblyman Phillip Chen – Unable to attend.

Patrick O'Donnell – Assembly Education Committee Chairman

- Prop. 98 is supposed to set a minimum amount of school funding, not a maximum.
- In his proposed state budget, the Governor is trying to "shave down Prop. 98 in a two-step dance." The Governor says education got too much funding for the past two years, so he would reduce this year's education budget by \$860 million. Recalculating the past two years to a lower level will decrease Prop. 98 funding in future years.
- School facilities are an important priority for O'Donnell. The process to get school construction approved is too long and complex. He has introduced a bill, AB 203, which would streamline the process. [CAPTA has not taken a position on this bill.]
- The teacher shortage is affecting some school districts more than others. O'Donnell has two bills to address this issue. AB 169 would provide \$5,000 grants to new teachers who commit to four years working in a high needs school or teaching specific needed subject areas. [CAPTA supports this bill.] AB 170 would allow teacher education programs to be completed in four years, instead of the current five. [CAPTA has not taken a position.]
- Career Technical Education (CTE): There are multiple paths to success. The state needs to replenish funding for CTE and reboot that effort.
- Advocacy tips:
 - If you find it hard to read bills, read the summary – it's written in layman's terms.
 - Many legislators feel that schools get all the money. It's our job to advocate and explain why we need adequate funding!

Tiffany Mok, Senate Education Committee – Senior Policy Consultant

- “You will notice in Sacramento that you can talk about education for hours and no one mentions the student. The parents are their voice; that is why your work is important. That is your strength.”
- The teacher shortage is especially severe in special education, bilingual education, and STEM subjects. Teachers are not getting paid what they would get in positions outside of education.
- “We are hearing from many parents that the base funding in the Local Control Funding Formula is too low.”
- The funding issues with CalPERS/STRS is a big challenge facing the state.
- There is a lot of uncertainty and concern regarding what the federal government will do under the new administration. There are questions about the potential loss of health care funding, and what will happen to DACA “dreamers” after they graduate. Kids with undocumented parents are afraid they will go to school and their parents won’t be home when they get back.
- Elected officials need to visit public schools. It’s hard to have a policy discussion without that kind of information.
- The senate education committee is smaller than the assembly committee, but it has regional diversity. Members are all very cordial and can address issues and consider students without arguing which side you’re on.
- There is discussion of special needs and SELPA funding being incorporated into LCFF funding. Districts and parents are concerned.
- The LCAP rubric has been revised 3 times and the State Board of Education is receptive to input.
- There is a need for more mental health counselors. Twenty-nine percent of the schools in our state have no counselors of any kind – guidance, college, or mental health. Every school should have all three. Students say mental health is a top issue for them.
- Money is to convince voters, and we are holding those votes! When you meet with a legislator, first tell them your story. Talk about a specific policy and if it’s working or not (if not, it’s a problem). Illustrate your issue and have a solution or suggestion ready. You can do it!

