

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

JANUARY 2013

Next state budget process begins

The start of a new year means the beginning of a new state budget cycle in Sacramento. The governor and legislature will have to decide how to resolve the remaining \$1.9 billion deficit and how to allocate the additional revenue resulting from the passage of Prop. 30.

They will also have to determine if this is the right time to replace the existing school funding system with a weighted student formula, which would provide a base amount for each pupil plus an additional amount for low-income students and English language learners. Gov. Brown has announced that he plans to re-introduce this idea and propose ways to give school districts more flexibility in how they spend state funding.

The first step in the process is the development of a proposed budget, based on estimated revenues, which the Governor must submit to the Legislature by January 10. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) will issue its analysis of this proposal by the third week of February.

During the next months, Assembly and Senate budget committees will review the proposal and develop their own versions of the budget.

In mid-May, the governor will issue an updated "May Revise" version of the budget based on actual revenues received through taxes. The LAO will again present its analysis. A conference committee may meet to resolve the differences between the Assembly and Senate versions of the budget, and there may be continuing discussions between legislators and the Governor.

The state Constitution requires the legislators to complete the budget by June 15. If they miss the deadline, they permanently lose their pay and expenses for every day that the budget is not passed. If the Governor receives the budget on time, he must sign it by June 30.

Information about the budget and the budget process can be found at the following sites:

- The California Department of Finance will publish the complete budget at www.dof.ca.gov
- LAO reports may be found at www.lao.ca.gov
- For information and commentary on how the proposed budget will impact education, go to www.edsource.org
- Additional information, including an easy-to-read guide to the budget process, is at the California Budget Project, www.cbp.org

Calendar of Events

Advocacy Roundtable

Friday, January 25, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Orange County Department of Education

200 Kalmus Drive, Costa Mesa 92626

★Open to all PTA members.

California State PTA Legislative Conference

February 25 and 26, in Sacramento

For more information, go to www.capta.org

Sacramento Safari Registration

Registration for Sacramento Safari will open soon at www.fourthdistrictpta.org. This year you may complete your registration online and submit your payment through PayPal. You may also submit your payment by check through the mail.

Please remember that the registration cost includes the hotel stay and most meals. It does not include airfare, ground transportation or dinner the second day.

Don't miss this exciting opportunity to meet with lawmakers and education experts in our state capitol!

If you have any questions, contact Gisela Meier at sac-safari@fourthdistrictpta.org

The Latest Education News from Washington D.C.

presented by

Jacque Chevalier

National PTA's Senior Education Policy Analyst

Friday, January 25

9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Orange County Department of Education

Building D, Rooms 1001 and 1002

200 Kalmus Drive, Costa Mesa 92626

All PTA members are welcome to attend.

No need to RSVP... just show up!

Questions? Contact Fran Sdao at
roundtables@fourthdistrictpta.org

U.S. Department of Education turns down California's NCLB waiver

California's application for a waiver from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law has been turned down by the U.S. Department of Education. The law requires, among other things, that states show they are moving toward 100 percent proficiency of all students in English language arts and math by 2014. There are repercussions for schools and districts that don't show enough progress toward this goal.

Currently 70 percent of California schools that receive federal Title I money are in "Program Improvement," the designation for failing to meet NCLB goals. These schools must notify parents annually that they can transfer their children to another school, and must set aside 20 percent of Title I money for student tutoring and transporting students to schools of their choice. There are also restrictions on Title I dollars for teacher training. Statewide, this ties up \$353 million that schools could use for other purposes.

NCLB expired in 2007 and is overdue to be reauthorized, and possibly revised, but Congress has failed to act. Many people believe the goals of the law are impossible to achieve. The U.S. Department of Education agreed to issue waivers to states if they adopted rigorous academic achievement standards, programs to improve low-performing schools and an accountability system that included the use of standardized test scores to evaluate teachers and principals. California education officials estimated that it would cost \$2 billion to \$2.7 billion to meet the waiver criteria and objected to the use of test scores in evaluating educators.

NCLB inaccurately labels too many schools as failing, creating confusion among parents and the public, demoralizing teachers, and restricting the use of funding, said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson. He and State Board of Education President Michael Kirst asked that California be allowed to use its own accountability system for schools.

"We want relief from the parts of the federal law that aren't working, but that doesn't mean we're retreating from accountability," said Kirst. "Our system is better than NCLB at identifying which schools need help."

NCLB tracks school performance through the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports, while California has its own accountability system, the Academic Performance Index (API).

Waivers have been granted to 33 states and the District of Columbia. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said he might consider granting a waiver to school districts in states whose waivers are turned down, as long

as the districts meet the criteria, including evaluation systems. Eight California school districts have come together under the umbrella of the nonprofit California Office to Reform Education (CORE) and have expressed an interest in applying for these waivers. They include Long Beach, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento City and Fresno unified school districts.

CAPTA Legislative Conference

If you can't attend Sacramento Safari, you have another opportunity to visit the state's capitol with PTA: the California State PTA Legislative Conference. Or perhaps your unit or council can afford to send you to both.

This year's Conference will be held February 25 and 26, with overnight stay at the Embassy Suites Hotel. The cost is \$185, including conference activities and materials, two lunches and one dinner. Hotel and travel costs are separate and reservations must be made by participants.

For more information, go to www.capta.org.

Federal education budget cuts delayed by last-minute deal

The compromise deal approved by Congress on New Year's Day to avert the "fiscal cliff" gave California schools a two-month reprieve from potential cuts in federal funding. Congress delayed a decision on the automatic spending cuts until early March.

If the 8.2 percent federal spending cuts had gone into effect January 1, California would have lost more than \$350 million in education funding. The federal government provides less than 10 percent of school spending in the state, but most of the money goes to programs for poor children and students with disabilities.

The 8.2 percent in cuts for California would include:

- \$139.6 million in Title I grants to districts with low-income students
- \$107 million for special education, including services for preschool-aged children
- \$75 million for Head Start
- \$19 million in child-care subsidies
- \$15 million for career and technical education

The cuts to Head Start and to subsidies for school districts that serve families working at federal facilities were to take effect Jan. 1. The rest were scheduled for July 1.