

California State PTA Legislation Conference, February 25-26, 2013 Sacramento



Six members from our 4th District PTA Advocacy Team attended, plus our President and the Capo Leg Co-Chairs. From left to right: Diana Amirehteshami, Dennis Walsh, Shereen Walter, Nicola Weiss, Kim Anderson, Celia Jaffe (President), Sue Hill (Capo), Leslie Parker (Capo) and Gisela Meier.

There were a total of approximately 130 attendees from all over the state.

Guest Speaker Reports

Lupita Alcalá Cortez, Deputy Superintendent of Instruction
Report by Gisela Meier



Ms. Alcala reported on **Greatness by Design**, a 2012 report issued by the Task Force on Educator Excellence. The 48-member task force [including CAPTA Education Advocate Donna Artukovic] was created by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson. Co-chairs were Linda Darling-Hammond, from Stanford University, and Chris Steinhauser, superintendent of the Long Beach Unified School District.

The goal of the Task Force was “To recommend a system that will lead to teachers and administrators who are consistently well-prepared and well-supported, and who continue to have opportunities to grow throughout their careers.”

Greatness by Design recommends ways that California can recruit quality candidates for the teaching profession and assure that teachers and school administrators are well-prepared for their jobs and continue to learn throughout their careers. It seeks to encourage teachers to gain expertise in specialty areas (ESL, special education, math, science) and to encourage expert teachers to work in high-needs schools. It recommends a multi-faceted evaluation system with useful feedback that allows for professional learning opportunities. It also recommends a system whereby teachers can advance in their profession and move into leadership roles.

The recommendations in the Task Force report are influenced by the principles of professional learning, which include:

- Educators are learners, individually as well as in a community, and learning is continuous.
- Learning is collaborative, content-rich, based on inquiry, and an understanding of student learning focusing on evidence.
- The professionalism, expertise, experiences, and skills of an educator are acknowledged and respected.
- Professional learning is not a one-time session to learn a new skill or strategy that focuses on a job related issue.

The three overarching priorities:

- Create a *coherent continuum* of learning expectations and opportunities for all educators
- Develop a *learning system* in California that supports collaborative learning about effective practices at every level
- Develop a *consistent revenue base* by (1) creating a category of flexible funding for Professional Learning linked to standards, and (2) funding for state and regional infrastructure to support effective practices

These things will increase efficiency and reduce wasted costs, Cortez said.

To read the complete report, go to: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/greatnessfinal.pdf>

Rick Simpson, Deputy Chief of Staff to the State Assembly Speaker
Report by Gisela Meier



Regarding the budget, Rick Simpson said that Prop 30 stopped the bleeding, but was no windfall for education. The \$1.6 billion in additional funding is the equivalent of a modest cost of living adjustment (COLA). The increase in funding from Prop 30 is about \$3 billion; of that \$1.6 billion is for school programs and the other half is to buy down deferrals to public education.

The former Weighted Student Formula is now called the Local Control Funding Formula. It represents a total revamp of California school finance. It has more simplicity, transparency and equity than the current funding method, but there are

distributional consequences. The growth in funding for each school district will depend on the type of students in that district. We need to make sure the consequences are reasonable and fair.

The Governor is committed to the idea of subsidiarity, which says that many decisions are best made at the local level. Simpson stated that there is not a shred of data to support the idea that student outcomes would be better with subsidiarity. There is no evidence either way. There should be some kind of evidence that this major shift will lead to better student outcomes.

When we talk about the allocation of school funding, Simpson believes we should also talk about adequacy. We have cut 22% of funding, with impacts on programs, students and faculty. Do we want to launch a new funding system outside the quest for adequacy? Simpson is concerned that when we get to the adequacy discussion, people will say it has been fixed. We also need to look at local funding options.

Teacher evaluations will be a big deal in Sacramento this year. Assembly Member Buchanan has a teacher evaluation bill, similar to last year's AB 5.

Assessments will also be a big deal. With the new tests, do we still need CAHSEE? There will be a dilemma because California is committed to the new assessments as part of the Common Core State Standards consortium, but we won't be ready. The infrastructure is not there. The funding for professional development has been used for other purposes. Money for textbooks has also been used for other purposes. There is no level of confidence that teachers will be trained, that materials will be available and that students will have been taught the new standards by the time the new tests begin. Simpson thinks that there are a couple of options: Don't give the new test; but you can't use the old test on the old standards because there are consequences based on those. Or give the new test, but don't use the scores for any high-stakes decisions. That is probably the smarter policy, but it is politically tougher.

The Governor has proposed to fund online education as regular ADA, but the research Simpson has seen suggests that online student outcomes are worse in terms of graduation rates.

The Governor also proposes to shift adult education from school districts to community colleges, along with \$300 million in funding. Simpson predicted the colleges would use the funding for basic skills education. The problem with the plan is access to adult education; there are not as many community colleges as there are local schools.

The state school facilities bond will soon be out of money. The Governor is concerned about adding to the state's "wall of debt." Should the responsibility for facilities funding be shifted locally?

Simpson said his boss (Assembly Speaker Perez) says the LCFF has to go through the legislative policy process, rather than being passed as part of the budget.

If we're serious about adequacy in funding, it has to be local, according to Simpson. Parcel taxes are "the stupidest thing on the planet." It is a regressive tax. Local property tax is ensconced in the State Constitution as a funding source for education. While the ability for school districts to raise taxes locally may create some equity issues, there are ways to deal with that.

On NCLB: "The federal government should jump in the ocean on education. Education is a state issue." California ought to do what is best for California. California should not have test-based teacher evaluations just to get federal funding. That's bad public policy.

Karen Staph-Walters, Governor's Education Advisor
Report by Shereen Walter



Karen Staph-Walters was in her fifth day on the job as the Governor's new Education Advisor when she came to speak to us at the State Legislation Conference. As the Education Policy Advisor, she is in charge of making the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) successful.

Staph-Walters spoke briefly about the NCLB waiver in California and how some core urban districts in California are coming forth with their own waivers.

She wanted to convey to the group what the Governor is like. He is very impassioned about the idea of subsidiarity – or what we like to think of as local control. He believes that parents and local school boards know better about how to handle our schools than the state or the feds.

The LCFF needs to be as good as it can be before the budget gets finalized because it will go through as a budget trailer bill, Staph-Walters said. She would like our input. The Governor is sincere about this and wants LCFF in place before next school year.

What he is proposing will not get schools back to adequate funding and he (the Governor) knows it. Schools are about \$60 billion behind. But the LCFF is trying to not hurt any school districts. The governor tried to come up with a respectable base.

Staph-Walters stated that schools should be evaluated on output, not by measuring inputs, referring to how our state ranks in per student funding.

In response to a question about moving the LCFF out of the budget trailer bill and into the legislative process, Staph-Walters said that there is lots of discussion throughout the education budget process.

CAPTA Advocates on Key Issues

Report by Dennis Walsh

Linda Mayo, Vice President for Health

Their priorities continue to be promoting healthy lifestyles, and health, and making sure there are help and support services within reach of all students. A lot of this has been done through the schools wellness policies.

We all know that a child who is not healthy will not reach his or her full potential.

PTA promotes a full range of physical education that engages all students in active and lifelong activities. It is important to make sure that kids are getting the maximum minutes of PE.

PTA positions:

- Combine state and federal resources to help with children's welfare.
- Fully support school-based health clinics provide greater access to health care.

PTA has two new tools: a Health Pocket Pal and a leadership training presentation.

Cathy Hall, Health Advocate

Her responsibility is to follow bills that have anything to do with student health. One big topic this year is the federal Affordable Healthcare Act. In California a lot of kids were rolled into the Medicare program and the PTA wants to make sure that they are getting proper and affordable healthcare including behavioral and mental health care and immunizations. They also want to make sure that kids have access to quality nutrition

Kathy Rabun, Vice President for Community Concerns

The major concerns they are looking at are:

- Bullying - There's a special tool kit for bullying regarding special education students.
- Foster youth as they're a very high-risk group.
- Chronic absenteeism, missing school for any reason. The school needs to follow up early and find out what resources can be used to help the children.
- Safe teen driving and distracted driving. The PTA is supporting the graduated driver's license. A lot of youth are waiting until they're 18 to get their license so that they can avoid the restrictions on licenses for people under 18. Studies show that the 18-year-olds who have just gotten a license are worse drivers than 16-year-olds when they start driving.

Michael Butler, Community Concerns Advocate

The California PTA supports Senator Diane Feinstein's bill to restrict semi-automatic weapons and large capacity magazines. California has some of the strongest gun control legislation and is among seven states that have strong gun-control laws. They are looking at closing loopholes in the gun laws and also looking at controlling ammunition. They will be keeping an eye on school site safety

Dianna MacDonald, Vice President for Education

This group is working on STEM or STEAM, as we like to call it – science, technology engineering and math. The “A” is for arts. They are also working on summer learning loss.

Donna Artukovic, Education Advocate

One of the issues she follows is English language learners. In the last 25 years the English language learners population in California has doubled to over 1.5 million. Last year 50% of our kindergarten students in California were English-language learners. We have failed this group of students. They have the lowest graduation rate of any student group demographic.

- 30% of English language learners who reached ninth-grade drop out.
- Only 13% of our English-language learners earned a bachelor's degree.
- 89% of English language learners fail to reach adequacy annually.
- 60% of English language learners come from poverty.

The California PTA supports the idea that English language learners need supplemental funding.

Kathy Moffat, Education Advocate

Standards: It is the purview of each of the states to develop standards for education. The governors of the states got together to develop the Common Core Standards so that all states are working from the same standards. California adopted the Common Core Standards in 2010. Since then there has been a progression of steps.

Student Assessment (testing): Our current assessment rules expire in 2014. There is a lot of work to do to get ready for the next series of statewide testing standards. It will be computer based, and computer adaptive. That means that the computer will change the questions based upon how well the student is doing, so if student gets certain questions wrong they might ask an easier question in that area to try to try to find out where that student really is. It will be able to adjust the test to the student's abilities so that the high achievers won't be able to just zip through the test and the student who is struggling won't be so frustrated that they can't get any answers. It is also felt that the time currently necessary to do testing will be reduced and they will still have accurate assessment information.

Brian Bonner, Vice President of Parent Involvement

Three main priorities:

- Early childhood education
- Family engagement
- Foster care

California has the second largest percentage of military connected families in the nation. The state was not following the laws regarding military base families and California PTA was able to get some support in that area.

Tom Horn, Advocate for Parent Involvement

- Value of parent engagement
- Early childhood education
- Quality childcare and early the education preschool
- Early preschool education

The more money you spend on the front end of education means there is less money you need to spend on the backend.

Barbara Ledterman, Federal Advocate

She is following the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also called No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It is six years overdue for reauthorization. There are cases of schools with APIs over 900 being put in program improvement because of the problems they face with the current legislation. There is a lack of legislators willing to deal with education. New legislators came in and started working on other priorities. Barbara feels that there will not be much done soon on the reauthorization. Currently all legislated programs of the federal government are up for review and/or reauthorization but there is a lack of will by the legislators to work on it.

She is also working on making sure that juvenile offenders are not put in with adult offenders, school safety, and the effects of sequestration.

Patty Scripter, on behalf of Shayne Silva, Budget and Education Finance Advocate

They are looking at both the effects of Prop 30 and Prop 39 on the budget. Most people recognize that Prop 30 does not bring new money into education, although the general public thought it would. When looking at the budget, including the Local Control Funding Formula, the problem is that the base grant is not adequate

The Governor's plan for the budget includes some very optimistic numbers. Revenue limits provide about two thirds of the schools revenue. The remaining is through categorical funding. The last few years categorical funding has been flexible so that schools can keep their doors open. The Governor's plan would eliminate most categorical funds.

That creates a problem for PTA because many times we have fought for a particular program which is funded by a specific categorical and the PTA would like to still see those programs continue. PTA is concerned about whether those programs are going to come back or not since there's no specific categorical for them. There is a concern about timing. This is a major revamp of how schools are funded. Seven years ago, the Getting Down to Facts report told us we did not have enough resources and that the funding model was overly complicated. We needed to move to a more transparent form of funding.

The PTA is concerned about the implementation of the local control funding formula. There's not enough money for education. We need to make sure that transparency, accountability, and parent involvement are a part of the criteria for this new program. If there is local control we need to make sure that all the stakeholders understand the numbers and where the money is going. Of course there's concern that the Local Control Funding Formula is not going to the policy commissions and it is just being done as a budget item.

Patty also said the PTA is looking at the bill to lower the threshold for parcel taxes.

Nancy Skinner, 15th Assembly District, Chair of the Assembly Rules Committee
Report by Gisela Meier



Nancy Skinner said she cares deeply about lessening gun violence and has authored a bill to regulate ammunition. California has good laws to regulate gun purchases that require ID, a 10-day waiting period and a background check. There are no laws in place regarding bullets. The state Department of Justice has an APS data base of people who are not supposed to buy guns. If the Department finds that one of these people has purchased a gun it notifies the local police department, which can confiscate the weapons and deal with parole violations. AB 48 would extend that system to purchases of ammunition. Will this eliminate all gun violence? No. In most cases the shooter has mental health issues. Her staff is meeting with mental health professionals and the justice department to determine what is a better tool in terms of safety.

She is also working on a bill that would ban the sale of conversion kits that allow a gun to shoot 30 or more bullets a minute. Various other bills on gun safety are going through the two houses of the legislature. The Governor always asks if a bill will make a material difference. We need action from the public to push these bills through.

Senator DeLeon has a bill that would require bullets to be purchased in person, rather than mailed through the Internet.

Prop 39 will raise about \$1 billion in new funding, with half to go to the general fund and half to go to a clean energy and job creation fund.

Joan Buchanan, 16th Assembly District, Chair of the Assembly Education Committee
Report by Leslie Parker



Assembly Member Joan Buchanan, elected to the State Assembly in November 2008, currently represents the 15th Assembly District, which includes portions of Alameda, Contra Costa, Sacramento and San Joaquin counties. Her new district, as a result of 2010 Redistricting, is the 16th Assembly District. Assembly Member Buchanan is serving her first year as Chairwoman of the Assembly Education Committee bringing a deep understanding of educational issues gained during her 18 years serving on the San Ramon Valley School Board, including four terms as board president.

With the Governor's new budget, Assembly Member Buchanan feels this is an opportunity for California to play a key role in policy discussion regarding public education funding. Former Governors Earl Warren and Pat Brown understood the importance of public education and public education funding. Ms. Buchanan said, "Public education is the real engine of our economy." She feels education needs to be part of the community culture; we need to find revenue sources in the community. PR is needed – tell good stories about your school and send the message that "public investment in education is a good investment."

Regarding Governor Brown's Local Control Funding Formula, Assembly Member Buchanan applauds Governor Brown n taking leadership on attempting to simplify the formula for school funding but she is concerned that in its current state, it may pit districts against each other. She stated that the current system is bad and unfair, as revenue limits vary so much. She acknowledges that all communities have expectations and there must be an equitable formula. For example, the funding for home-to-school transportation is distributed unevenly. Pasadena gets \$3.2 million while Palmdale gets only \$300,000, though they have equal demographics. "The education community circles the wagons and shoots at each other."

Since the Governor isn't increasing Prop. 98 funding, adequacy has to be part of the conversation. Nobody in the education coalition is in any hurry to move forward with LCFF. We must increase our investment in education in a thoughtful manner. It is important to get the policy right – identify the problem, come up with a solution and ask if it is good for the kids and education.

Assembly Member Buchanan is carrying bills on Teacher Evaluation and Teacher Discipline and Dismissal. In explaining her bill, AB 135, she addressed the difference between teaching as a "job" and a "profession." She stressed that if teaching is considered merely a job, then test scores and value added factors are enough, but viewing teaching as a profession builds the capacity of the system and helps students succeed. It requires a purposeful and focused evaluation that addresses the needs of the school districts with training that targets improvement. She does not feel that parent input is appropriate; it should be the responsibility of administrators since they are responsible for hiring, firing and setting improvement plans. She said, "You can't have a great school without a great principal or a great district without a great superintendent. Leadership is key."

Assembly Member Buchanan is also preparing AB 372, which will help clean up the Education Code by expediting the discipline and dismissal process, and cutting costs.

Regarding the Common Core and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, Assembly Member Buchanan said we have to support the technology requirements financially. Hearings will be held on implementation; resources and planning are key.

Dan Schnur, Director of the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics at USC

Report by Diana Amirehteshami



Dan Schnur is an engaging speaker. He used wit and laughter to entertain, enlighten and encourage the CAPTA to continue to fight for California's children and their education.

Schnur said PTA members should not look at the loss of Prop. 38 as a failure but use it to continue toward the goal. "You must look back in order to prepare for the future." He showed how Governor Jerry Brown understood what the voters needed to hear in order for his Prop. 30 to win. He knew that voters want more money for schools and that they don't trust the State government to get it there. He touted welfare reform and pension reform and got rid of cell phones for government workers. He gained the trust of the people if only temporarily.

Now that California believes the problem is fixed with the passage of Proposition 30, Governor Brown's challenge is to keep the fantasy alive. It's not difficult to convince California to raise taxes. The difficulty is asking them to raise taxes on themselves. It has been 20 years since Californians have voted to tax themselves. Schnur challenged CAPTA to use their energy and commitment to the children of California to try again in one to three years.

The people of California still don't believe government can spend their money well. If CAPTA wants to convince California that Prop. 30 is not enough, they need to present a package. "Spend more money, but spend it wiser," Schnur advised. The polls and election results show California is more willing to increase taxes at the local level. People are less leery of their local leaders and feel they have more power at that level.

In the 1960s, PTA was the most powerful voice in Sacramento. What has changed is that more money is spent on campaigns. Caring is not enough. Schnur says that corporations and unions run America. They are the "big trucks with the speakers blasting out their message, drowning out the grass roots message." Maybe you can't limit the amount of money spent in campaigns, but you can weaken the link in political giving by changing the little things. Put a ban on fundraising for state officials while they are in session and for 24 hours after they are out of session. Reform vs. money.

Schnur's advice was laid out in three steps:

- Recognize California understands that schools need money
- All politics is local
- Do something to change the way politics is funded in California

In response to a question about how to get legislators to do what they say they will do, Schnur said to "set the bar high," have competitive elections, get the right people in the legislature – people that will work with each other. Attract a better class of candidate. Let them know they can be replaced if they don't listen.

Schnur said the way to reform education would be to "treat teachers on the same level as brain surgeons." Make sure the best teachers wealthy and respected. Encourage the worst to do something else.

Schnur's closing remarks were: "Believe more strongly than anything. Politics are too important to be left to the politicians. Leadership is a team sport. Change can't be made unless all parties are committed to that change."

Mac Taylor, California State Legislative Analyst
Report by Dennis Walsh



We are in a different fiscal situation than last year, and things have much improved. Three reasons why things are better:

- We have an economic recovery; it is moderate and relatively slow and it's not as big of a bounce back as we have seen in the past, but we are growing.
- Over the last four years there have been a series of legislative actions to get our spending and revenue in balance and we are seeing the results of that now.
- The passage of Prop 30 added a big chunk of revenue to the general fund.

Overall the state is in a much better situation than we have been over the last five years. It is possible that we will be looking at budget surpluses in the near future, which is a dramatic turnaround from where we were before.

We have to be cautious though because we have a very volatile revenue model and things can go up or down pretty quickly. About two thirds of our state income comes from personal income tax, and this is extremely volatile. We are very dependent upon high income taxpayers who have a lot of capital gains income, stock options, and bonuses, things that vary a lot from year to year. We are not out of the woods yet but we are clearly in a much better situation than we have been.

In January 2013 revenues were \$5 billion over what had been projected but unfortunately most of it is because of people accelerating their income into 2012, paying income in 2012 at the lower tax rates rather than the higher rated expected in 2012.

This has a big effect on the Prop 98 funding formula. Because of interpretation of how we pay back past Prop 98 responsibilities, it could mean that all the new money that comes in is going to go to Prop 98. This could mean that a lot of the money coming in is one time money, and if things don't stay the same next year then we could be back to the levels we were at. So we have to be careful to not use that money as ongoing. The state might do something to level things out so that we are not on a roller coaster. We will have to wait until the May revise, when we can see really where those revenue limits lie.

Mr. Taylor didn't want to get too gloomy though, because more revenue does mean more money for schools and there is some thought that some of that money is new money that's coming in and not just accelerated money.

The LAO (Legislative Analyst's Office) has two new reports on the website: a general report on Prop 98 funding and a separate report on the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), the Governor's proposal to restructure school funding.

In November 2012, the LAO put a report out for the legislature showing where we will be in the next five years if our current growth stays constant. It showed that Prop 98 would be growing about \$2-\$3 billion each year for the next five years. The downside is that there are a lot of things that could cause the revenue to go down and have a large decrease in revenues for Prop 98. The only thing you can be certain about is uncertainty, because we have a very volatile revenue structure. Because Prop 98 has hitched its wagon to the general fund revenues, it means that Prop 98 revenues are volatile and the school funding system is volatile.

But that is good news because it means that we are having real growth. It gives the legislature a lot of flexibility in what they can do with that money. Over the past few years the legislature has deferred payments to school districts until after

the end of the fiscal year, requiring schools to lend money to continue operating. More than \$10 billion of deferrals need to be paid back to the schools. The governor wants to use a big chunk of the money from Prop 30 to pay off a large part of the deferrals and then finish paying off the deferrals over the next five years.

This is very good news. It gets us back to the spending levels of 2007-08 which was the high point of funding. We might be back there by 2014-15 and after that increases in funding would be real growth of revenue to education.

Taylor talked about the major proposals in the governor's budget. The governor has put a lot of interesting ideas and reforms on the table, many of which the LAO strongly agrees with, and some his group has concerns with. But he thinks it has sparked a healthy debate about the way we fund schools.

The LCFF has a lot of strengths and it is a good starting point, but the LAO said it does have a few problems with it. Target Instruction Improvement Grants, money that goes to certain districts based on old lawsuits regarding segregation, have not been changed. The LAO is not sure why they are kept separate. Home to School Transportation is also kept outside the formula and that has no rational basis. There are also some concerns about how the Governor's plan funds county departments of education.

The LAO feels the Governor has made good changes to special education funding and alternative education funding, but they have a different view on adult education. The Governor wants to move it into community colleges. The LAO feel that many school districts are outstanding suppliers of adult education services. Some have maintained their programs, and some have dropped their programs. The LAO feels that adult education should be provided by local school districts because their facilities are more accessible to people who need the help.

Patty Scripter, State PTA Director of Legislation, said that California State PTA wants California to be in the top 20 states in funding by 2020 – "Twenty in 20." Would Mr. Taylor be willing to support us in that goal and help PTA make that argument? Mr. Taylor said he's not sure that he can support that idea because he has never felt that the state's goal should be a high spender but instead to be a high performer. Being the highest spender in any category should not be the goal. The goal should be high performance. If you could do things more cheaply than other states, that would be a great thing to do. He doesn't want to see a certain number on what we spend; he wants to see a high number on how we perform.

Nick Schweizer, Education Program Budget Manager, California Department of Finance
Report by Kim Anderson



Nick Schweizer gave us the highlights of the Governor's 2013-14 budget proposal, which is strongly focused on the principle of subsidiarity (decisions are best made by local entities):

- Prop. 98 will see an increase of approximately \$2.7 billion over the current year.
- There is a deferral pay-down of \$1.9 billion for the budget year and within 2- 3 years the plan is to have all the deferrals paid off.
- All the Prop. 39 money will go to schools and Community Colleges (CC's) for energy efficiency projects.
- \$300 million is allocated to CC's so they can provide Adult Education programs instead of K-12 school districts.
- Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) details are as follows:
 - Every school district will have a per-pupil base grant.

- A supplemental grant of 35% will be allocated to English Language Learners (ELL's), low-income students and foster care children.
- School districts with more than 50% of those students will be given a concentration factor of another 35%.
- K-3 classes will be given an 11% bump to try and reduce class sizes to 24:1.
- High schools will receive a 2% bump to encourage school districts to offer Career Technical Education programs.
- There will also be grade span adjustments, since middle and high school classes are more expensive than elementary classes.
- In 2013-14, \$1.6 billion is provided to get everyone 10% of the way to their new target.
- LCFF should be fully implemented in 7- 10 years.
- Accountability - Districts would have to identify goals and actions that:
 - Implement the state's content standards, like Common Core.
 - Increase the API scores and state assessment results for the school and all significant subgroups of students.
 - Improve high school graduation and attendance rates and lower the dropout rate.
 - Increase the percentage of students who qualify for the University of California and California State University schools, take Advanced Placement courses and enroll in career technical courses.
 - Address the specific needs of foster youth, low-income children and English language learners.
 - Provide "meaningful opportunities for parent involvement" by, at a minimum, supporting a school site council or taking other measures, such as appointing an ombudsman for parents.
 - These plans have to be submitted to county offices for approval and there are also audit requirements.

Abe Hajela, Capitol Advisors Group LLC
Report by Judy Reising



Abe Hajela is the lead counsel in the pending Robles-Wong v. State of California school finance case.

Background Information: Article 9 of the State Constitution states that education is a fundamental right of every child in California.

The Robles-Wong lawsuit plaintiffs are Maya Robles-Wong, 60 individual students, nine school districts, the California School Board Association, Association of California School Administrators and the California State PTA.

Abe Hajela stated that the plaintiffs want the court to say that the school finance system is unconstitutional because it doesn't meet these two criteria:

- (1) It is not aligned with the state standards program.
- (2) It doesn't meet the different student needs.

On January 14, Judge Brick from the Alameda Superior Court ruled that the case can go forward if the plaintiff's suit is amended to focus on (#2 above), whether or not the state's funding scheme provides equal opportunities to students throughout the state. The judge rejected the idea that the State Constitution mandates a "qualitative standard" for public education.

The case is up on appeal with a panel of the Court of Appeals. They will determine when the next hearing will be, which could be anywhere from three months to one and a half years.

Chris Reeve, Senior Consultant to the Assembly Committee on Human Services
Report by Leslie Parker



Human Services encompasses Child Welfare, Foster Youth, Child Development and Early Childhood services. The biggest issue for Reeve in the Governor's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is how to handle the "multipliers" or supplemental grants regarding foster youth. Currently there is a categorical funding source for Foster Youth Services that provides education services such as counseling and district liaisons, which allow for coordination with the various child welfare departments. Reeve expressed concern about insufficient funding under LCFF to hire personnel and continue the level of service currently being provided. Due to privacy laws, there is limited access to foster youth, and kids aren't comfortable with their information being in so many places, or having so many people from various agencies involved.

Once again, the question remains, "Will there be adequate funding to meet the needs of this population of our youth?" Mr. Reeve is concerned that the elimination of this categorical will leave insufficient funding to meet the special needs of these kids. With realignment of services from state to county level, more acute services are the responsibility of the local education communities. While the number of foster youth has dropped to about 60,000, AB12 (2008) allowed for foster youth to choose to remain dependents of the court to the age of 21, which puts an extra burden on the county for transitional services. AB 1712 is being proposed to seek funding for greater access for foster youth to counseling and nursing services.

Rick Pratt, Consultant to the Assembly Education Committee
Report by Shereen Walter



Rick Pratt talked about issues being discussed by the Education Committee, including the Local Control Funding Formula, teacher evaluation and teacher dismissal.

The length of time and cost to dismiss a teacher are not acceptable. A newly proposed bill will look at the process once a district takes action to dismiss a teacher. Last year's bill (SB1530, Padilla) weighed teachers rights vs student safety. Under current law, the teacher is removed from the classroom and referred to a credentialing body. SB 1530 would have dismissed teachers for sexual misconduct and put them in front of a commission of professional competence. Currently, they go before two certificated teachers and an administrative law judge. Most decisions are unanimous. SB 1530 would have removed the two certificated staff and would have made the decision advisory. The new law would change the criteria for the two certificated teachers.

Teacher evaluations should be used as a means to improve classroom instruction. Tools already exist to dismiss unsuccessful teachers. "Good administration is key to quality control."

LCFF – want to see this as a policy decision. Rick Simpson says "No bill, no law". Schools may meet their target base, but may not get back to 2007 levels of funding.

Transitioning to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in two parts

Report by Sue Hill

Part one was presented by **Nancy Brownell**, Senior Fellow, California Department of Education

Focus on Standards

The common core standards were developed as part of a state led effort coordinated by the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers to create clear consistent standards across the states with a goal of having all kids college and career ready by graduation. These standards were adopted in California in August 2010. All but five states have adopted the CCSS.

CCSS Benefits

- Aligned with college and work force expectations in a rapidly changing world.
- Clear, understandable, consistent and rigorous
- Internationally benchmarked
- Students can demonstrate both knowledge and skill.
- Consistent expectations and the ability to share resources.

English Language Arts (ELA)

- Additional standards for reading and writing in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects.
- Students will read and write in non-ELA classrooms and develop information/technical writing skills
- Provide an acknowledgement of unique text structures found in informational text
- Maintain the focus on discipline-specific (academic) vocabulary, critical analysis, and evidence across the curriculum.
- Provide critical analysis/use of evidence to describe reasons to support specific points within a text, delineate speaker's argument and specific claims, and develop claims and counterclaims by supplying the most relevant data and evidence.

Reading goals: CCSS has more emphasis on helping students read better and make informed judgments about what they read. The goal is to "read like a scientist" and "think like a historian" in a deliberate way to increase knowledge. The Common Core will focus earlier on finding evidence and using evidence to support claims to better prepare students for real world applications. There will also be a plan to increase text complexity so that students will become better readers and participate in collaborative/persuasive discussions.

CCSS will include a component to strengthen other real world skills, such as working on a team, appreciating others point of view, and improving collaboration through the use of built in activities.

Mathematic Standards and Proficiency

CCSS contain eight big ideas concerning how we use math every day and applying it in real world context. Students will need to be able to explain what they are doing.

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- Model with mathematics

- Use appropriate tools strategically
- Attend to precision
- Look for and make use of structure
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

Common core math will reorganize standards at each grade. Algebra will still be an option in 8th grade.

The new mathematic standards are more focused and have coherence requiring thinking across grade levels and linking to major topics throughout a school year. CCSS in math are rigorous and focused on understanding concepts and becoming fluent in application.

For More Information: CDE CCSS Web Page: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc>

Subscribe to mailing lists and newsletter updates at:

Join-commoncore@mlist.cde.ca.gov and Subscribe-sbac@mlist.cde.ca.gov

Contact information: commoncoreteam@cde.ca.gov

Focus on Transitioning to New Assessments

Part two was presented by Jessica Valdez, Director of the transition office responsible for California's transition to the Common Core assessment and coordinating with Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) includes 24 state members and 21 are considered governing members. These 24 states represent 20 million students with 6 million of those are in California. Federal funds are being used to develop these assessments but the process is state led.

SBAC is working on developing three categories of assessments

- Summative: for accountability purposes, benchmarked to college and career readiness
- Interim: to gauge student progress throughout the year and used for actionable feedback
- Formative: to use on a daily basis within the classroom to improve instruction

Smarter Balanced Consortium Assessment (SBAC) Basics

- Develop a set of comprehensive and innovative assessments for grades 3-8 & 11 in English language arts and math aligned to the CCSS.
- Students graduate prepared for postsecondary success in college or career
- The Common Core assessments are computer based and adaptive—adjusted to student's level of ability.
- The assessments are supposed to be operational in the 2014/15 school year.
- Creating a digital library of formative assessment tools available to all educators within Smarter Balance.

SBAC is led by a variety of states' K-12 and higher education representatives. Decisions are subject to state vote. California has two representatives on the Smarter Balanced Executive Committee (Co-chair Deb Sigman and Higher Education Representative Bev Young.)

Achievement Level Descriptor (ALD) development began in October 2012. Initial draft ALDs were released for public comment period, which ended on February 20, 2013. Revised draft ALDs, the online survey, and a recording of the Webinar are available at: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/achievementlevel-descriptors-and-college-readiness>.

A vote will take place in March 2013 to adopt the initial ALDs.

Technology readiness tool generates device and network "readiness reports" at the school level.

So far, 60% of schools entered information, which concluded that there is currently one device per three students statewide. And 90% of computers are ready for new assessments. The planned assessment window is 12 weeks.

Spring 2013 Pilot Tests of New Assessments

- Scientific Sample--Targeted specific set of schools from which data will be collected and "secure" test questions will be used. Although the tests are not timed, testing times have been approximately 2-3 hours.

- Volunteer Sample--available for schools that wish to try the assessments using non-secure questions. The testing window is April 9-May 10, 2013. Dead line to register is March 27, 2013. To register go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SmarterBalanced/Pilot>

For information on participation: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/smarterbalanced.asp>. Select the Spring 2013 pilot test hyperlink.

Opportunity for teacher involvement in review of Formative Assessment tools and practices through participation in a state network of educators to review submissions for the digital library of formative assessments. The state needs 100 educators to participate in this process and is accepting applications now.

STAR tests are set to sunset in July 2014; however, legislation has been proposed to alter that timeframe.

AB 484 (Bonilla): This bill was introduced at the suggestion of California Superintendent Tom Torlakson. It would suspend administration of the STAR program except for assessments in the core subjects necessary to satisfy the Adequate Yearly Progress requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, beginning the 2013/14 school years.

SB 247 (Liu): Proposed legislation to extend the use of STAR for two more years--sunset in July 2016 rather than July 2014. In addition, grade 2 would be excluded from testing after July 2014.

Congressman Miller (CA-11th district) has proposed the Transforming Education through Technology Act (H.R. 521) that would provide funding for technology and upgrades for schools.

Join the CDE Smarter Balanced List serve by sending a blank email to:

Subscribe-sbac@mlist.cde.ca.gov

Contact Transition Office: sbac@cde.ca.gov or 916-445-8517

Smarter Balanced website: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/>

CDE Smarter Balanced Web Page: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sbac/>

*SSPI report is available at: www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/documents/suptrecrpt2013.pdf

Notable Quotables

By Celia Jaffe

Lupita Cortez Alcalá

"Professional learning is something most teachers and administrators do every day."

"We [CDE] are here to improve teacher learning."

Rick Simpson

On April Fool's Day being his 35th anniversary working at the capitol:
"An entirely appropriate anniversary for working in the puzzle factory."

"The passage of Prop 30 stops the bleeding but doesn't provide any windfall for education despite what the advertising promised."

About the Speaker requiring the Local Control Funding Formula to be introduced as a policy bill rather than folded into to the budget: "No bill, no law. Period."

"Parcel taxes are the single stupidest tax ever."

On whether adding local funding options for education would result in Serrano-violating inequities:
"Always get the dough first and then make it fair."

"My general view is that the federal government can go jump in a lake as far as public education goes."

On making changes for a waiver of ESEA/NCLB:

"We should not do bad public policy for federal money that's being dangled out there."

Karen Stapf Walters

"That would be a really good thing for California if we got a State waiver."

On LCFF & principle of subsidiarity: "I can absolutely tell you that this is his [Governor Brown's] top education priority."

"Change is hard. It takes a lot of conversation, and I know that."

On whether LCFF should go through the policy process: "I don't think that should be a hurdle to the conversation."

Assembly Member Nancy Skinner

Regarding her gun violence prevention legislation:

"We can create some noise--PTA and others--to get some action moving on the assembly and senate floor."

Assembly Member Joan Buchanan

"As PTA leaders you are well respected and have a lot of influence here."

"Our children's education should not be a great experiment." (needs to be research-proven methods)

"We can't have a formula that pits district against district and school against school."

"The education community is famous for circling the wagons and shooting each other."

On the fact that LCFF does not bring any new funding to education:

"Rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic doesn't keep the ship from sinking."

Her principles on looking at education proposals:

"What's the problem you're trying to solve? What's the solution you propose? and Is it good for kids?"

On LCFF: "I don't know anyone in the education coalition who wants to barrel ahead with this."

On LCFF: "Why do we need to push through something in a couple of months that is going to affect education for decades to come?"

LAO Mac Taylor

Barbara Inatsugu about the role of the LAO: "His job description includes speaking truth to power."

"The only thing you can be certain of is uncertainty."

"Because Prop 98 has hitched its wagon to the general fund, that means Prop 98 funding is volatile."

About the Governor's budget:

"The Governor is putting a lot of very interesting things on the table."

Abe Hajela

"Local Control Funding Formula is a distributional proposal rather than increasing the total amount."

Nancy Brownell

"The goal [of CCSS] is students who are career and college ready when they leave twelfth grade."

"If you can learn at a deeper level for fewer standards, you'll be well served."

Dan Schnur

"I'm not just grateful to be here; I'm not just happy to be here. I'm honored to be here."

Regarding Prop 30 & education funding: "The challenge that California faces is that voters think they fixed the problem, and they didn't."

About voters being only willing to tax others: "I am going to write an initiative to tax out-of-town oil executives who smoke while they gamble at an Indian casino."

On the undue influence of money on legislators: "You are smart people. You are committed people. But there are people less smart and less committed who are able to drown you out."

On why everyone needs to listen to other points of view: "Not to change your mind, but to open it."

"I believe politics are too important to be left to the politicians."

"Politics is a team sport."

"Moving to California is a fundamental act of optimism."