

# Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

JUNE 2013

## Gov. Brown still cautious with May Revise budget proposal

Although California is taking in more tax revenues than expected this year, Gov. Brown continues to take a fiscally conservative approach to the state budget.

California collected about \$4.4 billion more than expected during the first four months. Gov. Brown does not expect this surge to last. In his “May Revise” of the state budget, Brown reduced the general fund allocation to \$96.4 billion, \$1.3 billion less than what was in his initial budget.

However, Gov. Brown does want to spend \$1.6 billion more on schools than he previously proposed. About \$1 billion would be dedicated to the implementation of the new Common Core State Standards for language arts and math.

The governor is also adamant about the passage of his proposed Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), which would radically change the way public schools are funded. Revenue limits and most categorical funds would be replaced with a statewide per student base amount. School districts would receive an additional 35 percent for students who are low income, English learners or in foster care, and districts with a majority of such students would receive an additional “concentration factor” of 35 percent for each student above the 50 percent mark.

This proposal continues to be controversial, with some districts worried that they will receive less funding than they normally would when the plan is fully implemented in seven years. California State PTA and other education groups point out that LCFF would not provide adequate funding for the state’s schools. After full implementation, California would still be \$10 billion below the national average for per pupil spending, said Assembly Member Susan Bonilla, Chair of the Assembly Education Committee.

Although Gov. Brown wanted LCFF to be passed as part of the state budget, the state Assembly and Senate have introduced different versions.

The Assembly bill, AB88 (Buchanan), is the same as the governor’s proposal, but a set of principals approved by the Assembly Budget Committee calls for smaller percentages of additional funding for targeted students and would increase the base amount for fixed costs such as instructional materials and building maintenance.

The Senate has passed SB 69 (Liu), which would eliminate the concentration factor (about \$2.5 billion) and use that money for base funding and supplemental grants instead. It would also delay implementation for one year.

Both the Assembly and Senate versions want to ensure that all school districts are returned to pre-recession funding levels.

The two versions of LCFF will have to be reconciled before a single bill is sent to the governor for possible approval.

California State PTA supports the concept of a simplified funding system and more revenue for high-needs children but has concerns about accountability and fiscal transparency. CAPTA’s position was detailed in a statement issued by President Carol Kocivar in May. (See the May issue of the *Advocacy Communicator* or go to [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org) and click on Advocacy.)

### Stay in Touch!

The PTA year is almost over, but work on the state budget continues in Sacramento. State legislators must complete their version of the budget by June 15. If the Governor receives the budget on time, he must sign or reject it by June 30.

As this important process unfolds, there may be opportunities for PTA members to voice their concerns, opposition or support. Please continue to watch your email for action alerts from California State PTA and/or Fourth District PTA. In the next few weeks the state will make decisions that will affect our schools for years to come.

Make sure your voice is heard!

## PTA Advocacy Dates for 2013-14

Planning is underway for another exciting year of advocacy with Fourth District PTA. Important dates:

- September 20 — **Advocacy Training**
- November 15, January 24, and April 4 — **Advocacy Roundtables**
- March 17 and 18 — **Sacramento Safari**

Ask your PTA to include about \$600 in next year’s budget for each person you plan to send to Sacramento Safari.

## Fourth District PTA makes it easy to be an advocacy chair

The position of advocacy or legislative chair can be intimidating. There is a lot to learn and the information constantly changes.

However, it is also a vitally important position for your PTA. Because the vast majority of public school funding comes from the state, decisions made in Sacramento often have a bigger impact on our local schools than decisions made by local school boards. It's important for PTA members to know what is going on in our state capitol and when to take action.

The Fourth District PTA Advocacy program makes it easy for you to be an advocacy chair, even if you have no experience. Here's what we offer:

- **Advocacy Training.** Learn what you need to know at the start of the PTA year, with programs designed for beginners and returning advocates.
- **Advocacy Roundtables.** Opportunities to hear from knowledgeable speakers on a variety of topics.
- **Leg-Link.** Emails to subscribed members provide

information about legislative activities and alerts when action is needed.

- **Sacramento Safari.** The ultimate advocacy experience! Spend two days in the capitol hearing directly from a variety of education experts and then visit legislators in their offices.
- **Advocacy Communicator.** A monthly newsletter with brief summaries of current events and important issues.
- **Talking Points.** Don't know what to say at your PTA meeting? Every month we provide a brief report that you may read or paraphrase.
- **Speakers Bureau.** If your unit or council would like an in-depth presentation on a particular topic, contact us and we will send a knowledgeable speaker to your meeting.
- **Advocacy Resource Notebook.** A comprehensive source of information about various advocacy topics.

For more information: [www.fourthdistrictpta.org](http://www.fourthdistrictpta.org).

## Nine California school districts apply for NCLB waiver

Nine California school districts, including one in Orange County, are asking for a waiver from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and are confident that they will win approval from U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

Santa Ana Unified School District has joined Long Beach, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento City, Fresno, Clovis and Sanger school districts in applying for the waiver under the umbrella of the nonprofit California Office to Reform Education (CORE).

The State of California also applied for a waiver but was denied earlier this year. NCLB 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.

NCLB is also known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or ESEA. It expired in 2007 and is overdue to be re-authorized, 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 state 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.

The CORE districts are proposing a school accountability system that would include standardized test scores, high school graduation rates, social and emotional factors such as absenteeism and suspension/expulsion rates, and student, staff and parent surveys.

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.

If the CORE application is approved, the nine districts would be released from these restrictions. Under the application, any district or charter school in California that agrees to the conditions would also be eligible for a waiver.

For more information, see the May 28 article by John Fensterwald at EdSource Today: [www.edsource.org/](http://www.edsource.org/) today.

**Thank you for your advocacy efforts on behalf of all children!**