

SACRAMENTO SAFARI 2014 – FULL REPORT

Written by Shanin Ziemer (unless otherwise noted!) - Buena Park Council PTA Advocacy Chair



Monday, March 17, 2014

Rick Simpson, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Speaker of the Assembly

He spoke first on how much he enjoyed visiting High School students in our district in the fall. Then moved on to the topic of the current political context in the capitol. This is an election year and the Governor and other elected offices will be on the ballot. All 80 Assembly members and half of Senate seats will also be up for election. He expects Governor Brown to be re-elected, but the race will be interesting. The republicans are retooling and hoping to take back enough seats to cost the democrats the 2/3 super majority. Term limits have changed, so now legislators can serve 12 years total, independent of house (used to be three 2 year terms in the Assembly and two 4 year terms in the Senate for a total of 14 years in 2 houses). There used to be a lot more job shopping and switching of houses, but now legislators are staying in one house. This should give us more stability, knowledge, and seniority in committees.

On early childhood education: "The research is unambiguous" that quality preschool makes a difference, especially for low income students. For each \$1 spent, we get a return of \$3 to \$8. "Our social discount rate is too high." In other words, we discount the future benefits of early childhood education in comparison to current costs. Countries that compare to us economically already have universal early childhood education. SB 837 (Steinberg) wants to expand Transitional Kindergarten (TK) to all 4 year olds. The issue is cost, estimated to be about \$1.5 billion. The way the mechanics of Prop 98 work, it could mean an increase of about \$2.2 billion into the education bucket. This would encroach on the non Prop. 98 side of the budget. Other concerns are the mixed delivery system, with school districts being able to contract out with current non public pre-school providers. The speaker would prefer increased funding for current pre-school programs that serve low income families.

On Common Core School Standards (CCSS): California's waiver was approved by the federal government allowing us to take a break in testing for the year while we transition to the Smarter Balance Assessments for CCSS. The previous change of standards in the 90s was transitioned in over 6 years. We are in the 4th year of transition. School districts are asking for more money for professional development (aka teacher training). Districts have used about half of the available funding so far. But it's a zero sum game in that any money added to professional development has to be taken from something else.

On teacher training: There is about a 30% drop in college students enrolling in teacher training programs. This will create a problem when we want to hire teachers in the future. There is a negative perception of the profession that Rick believes is contributing to the drop in students going into the teaching profession. A lot of anti-teacher rhetoric is out there, like bills to lower state contributions to teachers retirement funds, make teachers easier to fire, having longer probation periods, etc. How do we promote teaching as a worthwhile profession? Also, all the research shows that more experience = better teachers.

On online instruction: Gov. Brown is proposing to increase online instruction. There is a lot of data to show that it isn't an effective alternative and has much lower success rates. Studies on online instruction have shown poorer outcomes in all subgroups. There is 6-8 times higher dropout rate, 30% lower graduation rates, less students go on to college, and they progress at half the speed. There are several variations in online learning including blended classes (online and some class meetings), classes that meet online at set times (direct instruction), and classes that you progress at your own rate with no live interaction with the teacher. He wants proof that expanding online education is a worthwhile investment. Currently districts are paid by Average Daily Attendance (ADA), so how would that work with online courses. Also, what sort of instructional requirements would there be? The proposal would have aides providing instruction under the supervision of a credentialed teacher. Should aides count as teachers?

Q: Why push kindergarten back and add early education? A: When we created TK, it was to move the starting age of kindergarten students back while not forcing schools to lose population and ADA. Steinberg would change that to all 4 year olds get TK and then move on to kindergarten. Many don't realize kindergarten is optional, so there are bills to make it required and let TK be optional.

Q: Were the studies of online classes for solely online classes with no live meetings? A: There were several studies of a variety of styles.

Q: What are the options for technology for the implementation of CCSS assessments at needy schools? A: The schools got about \$200 per student for the implementation of CCSS. Districts got to decide how to spend that money. They could use it for technology or professional development.

Q: How do we ease in the new curriculum and testing? For example, right now the 4th grade curriculum assumes you had the new CCSS for 1-3 and that you know things you might not have learned. A: We are transitioning. Part of that was getting rid of the testing.

Q: Can you discuss Government Accountability and Standards Board (GASB) 68? A: It addresses underfunded retirement liabilities for teachers. Districts now have additional reporting requirements for underfunding. This is a big issue with CALPERS (California Public Employees Retirement System) & CalSTRS (California State Teachers Retirement System). Something will have to change. In the future, expect modest increases in employee contributions. The funds earned 19.1% last year!

Q: How do we expand the value of teachers in our state? A: Teaching used to be one of the few careers open to women a couple generations ago. Now schools have to compete because women have so many options. Currently, our policy signals are negative, and teachers aren't as culturally valued. He has no idea what to do for this.

Q: What if our school would rather bring back librarians or school nurses rather than have TK? A: There is a limited pot of money so we have to make trade-offs and choices. Let your elected officials know your priorities.

Q: How are teacher training programs prepping teachers for CCSS? A: Mary Sandy & Linda Darling Hammond say they do, but I don't know specifics. It's a bigger deal for elementary teachers than high school teachers.

Mac Taylor, THE Legislative Analyst

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) is one of the most respected institutions in our state. They are a non-partisan, unbiased office that looks at legislation, ballot measures, and the governor's budget proposals and determine the fiscal ramifications. Simply put, they are the money guys who figure out how much something will cost.

In the past my visits have been a downer, but now the State is in better economic condition. I am not an education expert, I'm a money guy. Our general fund budget is projected to grow over the next several years. But several things are not included in that growth projection: Inflation adjustments, paying off budgetary liabilities (e.g. paying down debts & deferrals early), paying off various unfunded retirement liabilities (CalSTRS), and policy proposals (new legislation that has associated costs or restoring cut programs).

The way our state gets its income is very volatile (subject to quick changes), so a small downturn can grow fast. We really haven't got a surplus, because we have a deficit of owed monies. We should use these one-time monies for one-time expenses such as: building a reserve, paying off debt, and keeping programs funded including factoring in inflation. We should not create new and ongoing commitments.

We continue to see moderate growth and expect it to continue in the 2014-15 year. Employment is up 2.2%, income is up 5.4%. This creates an additional \$6 billion in the general fund. Prop 98 gets 2/3 of that for \$4.1 billion. \$1.6B of that will pay off bonds, and \$0.4B will go the university system. The governor wants to use the rest to pay down deferrals (deferrals are monies the schools are owed under Prop 98 but weren't payed on time, with a promise to pay us later). Some want to use the money to reach the full funding levels of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) earlier. Others want to create ongoing expenses and programs. A balance would be reasonable, a mix of one time spending, pay down debt, help LCFF implementation. The governor did plan the Prop 30 expiration well to phase out over a few years so there will be no 'cliff' of lesser monies. Growth is expected to help keep funding smooth. The governor proposes setting up a Prop 98 reserve to protect schools against volatility. Deposit into it when the economy is strong, and make withdrawals when the economy is weak to keep up with the cost of living and funding levels so we wouldn't have years of cuts.

CalSTRS unfunded liabilities are a big issue. There are longstanding funding problems that have led to a \$70 billion underfunding. We would need to pay \$4 to \$5 billion a year for 30 years to make up for it. There are questions such as who should pay, where should the money come from? Should the money come from within Prop 98 or outside of it. Maybe it's time to examine the roll the state has in funding teacher retirements so the state isn't on the hook?

Other issues to deal with... TK would increase enrollment and ups the ADA and Prop 98 money that would go to education, but that money has to come from somewhere (e.g. court system, jails, health services). We need to revamp the home to school transportation categorical funding system. It is convoluted and lacks parity (some school districts get much more per student than others). On financing school facilities, this is an issue of ageing buildings. New bonds create debt at the state level, but can be used to give matching funds grants to schools. Perhaps the state should create an ongoing stream of revenue to help handle school facilities?

Q: What participation rate would you expect for TK? A: We assumed 70% at full implementation.

Q: California has traditionally had a 5 to 6 year economic cycle of growth before taking a downturn. We are now going on 4 years of growth. Do you project a downturn? A: There is still slack in the economy so I don't see a downturn for 2-3 years. That's why we need to not over commit our monies and build up reserves.

Q: Where are the redevelopment funds? A: The state was backfilling for these, so school districts will not see the benefit, the state will.

Q: Why do teachers get CalSTRS? A: Teachers don't pay in or get social security.

Q: What happened to Prop 98 with LCFF? A: Prop 98 still determines how much money goes to education. It 'fills the bucket'. LCFF determines how the money is distributed.

Q: If we created a reserve, how much of that would go to schools? A: None, it's a reserve. It might later if needed.

Assemblymember Joan Buchanan

She started off as a PTA volunteer that wanted to make a difference and make improvements and changes, then she ran for school board, and now she's up here at the state assembly. PTA taught her a lot about being an effective advocate. She is here to talk with us about 3 big education issues: 1) Truancy, 2) Teacher dismissals, & 3) School facilities bonds. On truancy: Our state attorney general, Kamala Harris, has prioritized the issue of truancy. There are now 5 bills being floated on the issue. There are many reasons students don't attend school, and one bill would create the requirement to collect data on why students don't attend. We don't have enough data to know what the problems are. How can we provide supports to fix the problems without the data? Also, there is a bill to create a School Attendance Review Board (SARB) at each county department of education. Many counties don't have them (Orange County does). The idea is to gather the people involved to find out the problems that are preventing a student from attending school, and work to support the family and the student and resolve the problems and get the students to attend.

On teacher dismissal: First she thanked us for actually reading her bill and understanding the purpose. Many don't actually read bills they advocate for or against so they don't understand what they are arguing. There are 3 reasons to dismiss a teacher: immoral contact, unprofessional conduct, and unsatisfactory job performance. She explained the long and tortuous process currently for teacher dismissal. Currently to fire a teacher it takes two years and approximately \$150-200 thousand per teacher! Her bill would streamline the process and take it down to 1 year to save time and money.

On a school facilities bond: School facility bonds have provided state matching funds for those districts that have qualified. Many projects are too much of a "big lift" without state help. Currently school facility bond money has run out and there are not matching funds available. Our challenge now is that our governor does not want to add to the State's wall of debt. There is good debt and bad debt. School bonds are good debt. Currently our students are funded at \$3,500 below the national average!

Q: Do you think Senator Correa's teacher dismissal bill will pass and would the governor sign it? A: No & No.

Q: Should TK be funded through Prop 98 or should we expand current programs? The current proposal cost may be more along the lines of \$3B not \$1.5B is inside Prop 98. We need to grow the pot to adequately fund the students we have and not add more programs, even if they are great programs. And it might be illegal to give some students 14 years of schooling (the current TK kids) and other kids only 13.

Q: Kindergarten isn't mandatory? A: No, proposed bill AB 1444 (Weber) would make it mandatory.

Q: Do you think teacher evaluations will be addressed this year? A: No, it's an election year and there is no will. The Stull act addresses teacher evaluations, but it is too ambiguous. Teacher evaluations need to be more helpful and less punitive. They need to increase a teacher's capacity rather than rank teachers. Also, we need to address how to use test scores. Tests are designed to inform teachers on student progress, not to rank and sort teachers. Currently the Vergara case is addressing teacher layoffs, and whether we can lay off teachers based solely on seniority.

Q: What is the major roadblock to changing the teacher dismissal process? A: The administrative side claims they need the time to make their case. But if so, why would you start the dismissal process at all if you aren't ready to defend the dismissal? The teachers want full civil discovery and unlimited depositions.

Q: What percentage of dismissals go through the appeals process? A: A very small percentage. Most leave the profession when they get poor evaluations and find they aren't well suited to it.

Quick unplanned visit and hello from Mark Ecker, superintendent of Fountain Valley School District and President of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) and the executive director of ACSA, Wes Smith. They praised the PTA and talked about the value of our advocacy efforts and encouraged us to "Tell 'em how you really feel!" in our visits with legislators.

Colleen You, California State PTA (CAPTA) President

She started out as a kindergarten volunteer but really found her passion for PTA when she attended her first PTA convention. She praised the amazing board of Fourth District and said we have an amazing depth and breadth of knowledge on our board.

Advocacy is “Speaking up and speaking out” and while you are here in Sacramento, tell your story and share your passion. You are most compelling when you speak from your own perspective.

LCFF, LCAPs, & CCSS will drive the focus of education for the next couple of years. There is a huge variety of ways schools are implementing the LCAP process across the state. PTA is in a great position to engage parents, educate them on the process, and get them involved. “Confident advocates are informed advocates.” Check the CAPTA and 4th District websites for a wealth of information.

The newly released *PTA National Standards for Family – School Partnerships Assessment Guide (The Framework for Your School District’s Local Control and Accountability Plan)* is a 37 page document which provides indicators to successful, meaningful, and authentic parent engagement. Go to:

http://www.pta.org/files/National_Standards_Assessment_Guide.pdf to download your own copy of the guide. This is a great tool for talking to your administrators and has step by step directions to help you.

She has just returned from the National PTA legislative conference where she represented California at the Federal level. And she encouraged us to check out the SMARTS program to engage parents using the arts.

<http://www.capta.org/sections/programs-smarts/>

Kathy Moffat, CAPTA Director of Legislation

She is from 4th District and is a past VP of advocacy here! She says parents are good advocates because we have information our legislators need. They see the big picture but we know how things play out locally.

Currently on the CAPTA radar, LCFF & LCAPs. They are not just a difference in funding, but in the view of community involvement. Now parent engagement is required, not just encouraged. We need to educate and inform our parents. Your opinion is more valued if it is informed. Share the information you get here at Sac Safari to help inform your parents.

What is well informed? You should know...

- 1) How are we doing now financially?
- 2) What programs do we have in place now?
- 3) Which children excel, and which struggle?

Categoricals are almost gone. Though flexibility is good, those programs funded things we cared about such as GATE, the arts, Class Size Reduction (CSR), summer school, professional development, PE, and more. There are no more protected funds for those programs, so now we must advocate. “This is not business as usual. This is business in a new way.”

We are happy there are no cuts to education in the governor’s proposed budget. With Prop 30 and the improving economy we have additional funds. What should we do with them? The Ed Coalition (a consortia of major stakeholders in education) is discussing all this. We need teacher in-services to implement CCSS, should we use funds for this? The new Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC, the C is for Consortia, but the acronym is used for the test itself as well, called the S-Back) is being field tested. These field tests are to determine the efficacy of the tests, not to test student knowledge. When the new assessments are in place, they will test deeper knowledge and learning than previous tests. They are more rigorous, complex, and deep. One question could test multiple areas. They are more of a puzzle to work

out than a fill in the bubble type test. The test could have multiple correct answers (select A, B *and* E) instead of just one correct answer. The test is adaptive, so it adjusts to student's level. If they do well, the questions will get harder, and if they struggle, the questions will get easier. The idea is to figure out the student's level. It is more efficient at placing student achievement. Students who were previously discouraged by the test, will now be able to be successful. They will be challenged, but not defeated.

CAPTA is starting their Legislative Action Committee meetings to select bills on which we will take a position. Some of the big topics: Teacher suspension and dismissal, computer science in the curriculum, expanding TK (our current position on this bill is 'support if amended' because the issue is complicated. How do we handle facilities, teacher credentialing, money?), children's health & healthcare, truancy (lots of traction on this issue at the moment, 5 bills currently), child abuse, sports programs (concussion issues, background checks on coaches, gender equity), and how to measure API (the Academic Performance Index) taking other issues into account and not just test scores (e.g. such as attendance & graduation rates).

Convention resolutions give us the authority we need to take positions on bills.

Paul Richman, Executive director of CAPTA

"Are you ready to storm the capital and raise your voice?" I am grateful for all the good work you do. March is Arts Ed Month, check out our SMARTS Program (see link above). Also, check out our National Standards for Family – School Partnership (see link above). As an interesting topic to discuss, did you know that Prop 98 requires us to be among the top 10% of states in education funding for schools? But we're at about 49th. We also have the highest student to teacher ratios, and lowest ratios for librarians, school nurses, and other support. We get about \$8,600 per student annually, and the national average is \$12,600. We need about \$4,000 more just to get to average. If you are looking for something to ask your legislator for, consider asking if we can get to fully funded LCFF levels faster. The new Local Control Funding Formula sets a student teacher ratio goal in K-3 of 24:1.

The LCFF has 8 state priority areas that need to be addressed but all do not need to be addressed all at once. Educate Our State is a group of parent volunteers that is trying to qualify an initiative for the ballot. We are getting a lot of questions about it. It is about a very complicated funding technicality called a "triple flip" which benefits districts differently. We don't address initiatives until after they qualify for the ballot, so we have no position on this yet. But many PTAs have been approached, so we might do this one early. This is NOT a PTA group!

Q & A with CAPTA leaders

Q: Can you tell more about adaptive tests and how the data will be used? A: The point of the testing is not to compare & rank students, but to get a broader view of how districts are doing. Teachers are still doing benchmarks to inform instruction. This year there won't be an API for schools, and parents won't get individual child test results.

Q: How are we doing for technology? A: You can ask your schools where you stand. The field tests should help schools access their technology status and needs.

Q: What will truancy bills do for High School kids? A: The purpose of the SARB is the support the family and figure out what is needed to get a student to attend school.

Q: What affect would mandatory kindergarten have? A: It could make TK more relevant. Facilities issues are huge. (There are specific classroom size requirements that need to be met. Kindergarten and TK classrooms are required to be larger than other grades, along with the requirement of an attached bathroom.) Many campuses don't currently have a way to meet these needs.

Q: How do we advocate for TK when we need so much (librarians, CSR, etc.)? A: If not now, then when? It's complex, but research is conclusive that investing in early childhood education pays off in the future. We have the President in Washington pushing for it, the California Senate leader is in favor of it, the momentum is here now. We need to take the opportunity to keep the issue in front of our legislators.

Dinner Panel discussion moderated by Rick Simpson

Participants:

Lori Easterling, Manager of Legislative Relations for the California Teachers Association (CTA)

Sherry Griffith, Director of Governmental Relations, Association of School Administrators (ACSA)

Kathy Moffat, Director of Legislation, CAPTA

Dennis Myers, Assistant Executive Director of Governmental Relations, California School Boards Association (CSBA)

Q: Local control vs. state control, which is better?

A: Dennis: The backbone of successful outcomes is accountability, equity and stakeholder involvement. School boards do not just operate in a vacuum.

A: Kathy: We are excited about this new way to fund schools. It not only encourages parent involvement, but requires it. This is a good opportunity for active parents to get more involved and to recruit new parents to be active. Categoricals were frustrating because sometimes they didn't meet local needs.

Q: Is this new funding system a belief system?

A: Sherry: The state can set the tone and priority, we have 8 priorities, but this is holistic, not just CSTs (California Standards Tests). This will benefit not just vulnerable populations, but all students.

A: Lori: This is engagement at a level we've never had. The supplemental grant is the state recognizing poverty as an issue with learning and that is huge. It is a big change.

Q: Should concentration grants be a categorical required to be used only on those 3 needy populations?

A: Sherry: ELL (English Language Learners) generate the funds, but that population changes and moves. We need to train all teachers across the district, not just teachers in concentration schools. This will benefit the ELL and all students. What if you have an ELL student in a non-concentration school? You need all teachers to have the training.

A: Lori: There needs to be flexibility with the concentration grants to allow for programs that don't only benefit the needy students. We don't want to create separations.

A: Kathy: PTA believes the money should go to meeting the needs of those students, but if you have a program, it might benefit all students.

A: Dennis: Compliance is so 1980's. It isn't as important as measurable outcomes. We will be held accountable though the LCAPs. Our programs will be intentional and public. Public oversight is powerful.

A: Lori: The legislature has buyer's remorse and now they want some of the categorical back.

A: Rick: The legislature wants to solve problems, but only has blunt tools. They can only write laws and spend money. Interestingly, there is no study to show that local control is better than state control. That's why it's like a belief system; people just believe it is better with no proof.

Q: TK, there is legislative support to gradually expand it to all 4 year olds. Do you support it? What about the requirements? Should the state fund private providers with state money?

A: Lori: There are a lot of issues. If not now, with this momentum, we won't get it done. What do we do for 4 year olds academically? Should it be funded in Prop 98? The budget aspect is big, it's a whole additional grade. We believe the teacher should be a credentialed teacher. We would need a transitional time to ramp up the work force and facilities. There are many steps needed. Maybe we should expand preschools and not TK?

A: Sherry: I am a former preschool teacher so this is close to my heart. We need to make sure that academic requirements are developmentally appropriate. Every student grows at a different level. TK or preschool, the name doesn't matter. It must be developmentally appropriate. I am concerned with timing and money. It is a big issue to balance a mandate with the required facilities. And what happens to other programs that exist now? For private providers we worry about home daycare vs. preschool. There are quality concerns.

A: Dennis: Labor & Management agree way more often than we disagree. CSBA supports TK, but we are looking through the LCFF lens, and you must see what your LCAP goals are. Facilities issues are big. How will we get enough credentialed teachers? Many districts are not ready to take this on. Funding is also an issue. As to private providers, we are looking at an issue of quality. We want education quality, not just daycare. This would increase our Prop 98 ADA

which could increase money, but we need adequate funding. We are already underfunded for those we serve currently. It's like we need a 2000 calorie diet, but are only getting 1200 and we're starving. We need adequate funding for all our students.

A: Kathy: CAPTA advocates strongly for this. This is a moment in time when there is a groundswell of support from important quarters. We don't have adequate facilities and a big issue right now is that we don't have any bonds to offer districts to help them build the needed facilities, so we would need construction money. There are also church vs. state issues with church run preschools if we go to private providers.

Q: Vergara vs. California challenges seniority based teaching layoffs. Respondents say seniority equals experience and experienced teachers are better. Do you think seniority is a fair basis for layoffs? If not, what would be fair?

A: Lori: This group tried legislation first, but that failed so now they are going through the courts. We believe that seniority works for Reductions in Force (RIF – aka layoffs) but not for dismissal. If you have a good evaluation system in place, you can council out unqualified teachers. We know experience makes a positive difference. 2 years vs. 12 years is big. We need proper funding so this wouldn't be an issue. We wouldn't even be discussing this if we had adequate funding and didn't have to lay off teachers!

A: Dennis: We are not a party to this case, but we are watching it. In the past, we've been a supporter of more evaluation based layoffs. But if there are RIFs then everyone knows what to expect with seniority. If you add evaluations, it becomes subjective and leaves many ways to dispute decisions. So how would it work?

A: Kathy: State PTA has no position on this. But we do believe that several measures of effectiveness should be taken into account when evaluating teachers. Good evaluations include multiple measures with clear expectations aimed at improving teachers within their professions.

A: Sherry: We concur with CTA. There should be a legislative discussion. What do we do to ensure the best teachers are in the classroom? That is more important than seniority. If plaintiffs win, it just throws it back to the legislature anyway. There is a lot of frustration around this issue. Don't legislate by anecdote. There needs to be more latitude with RIFs than just seniority, like proper teacher placement (for example in specialties like science). Expertise is critical.

A: Lori: Teachers don't get tenure. They get permanent status, and teachers can be dismissed, but have a right to challenge dismissal.

Q: We know more about good practice. Should we revise laws and what constitutes good practice?

A: Kathy: Multiple measures of teacher effectiveness are needed. We need a fair, transparent, clear, open system of evaluation with high expectations. Knowledge of subject and student performance should be part of the system.

A: Lori: Principals for good teacher evaluations are on our website. SBAC has info to help evaluate teachers.

A: Dennis: This goes to adequacy. What do you need? An awesome leader and that's the role of the principal but they are so busy now. We need more personnel at our schools. We have 500 kids and one administrator and it's not sufficient. Multiple measures should include student performance as part of the process, but a weight of ½ is too much.

A: Sherry: Current statutes address this and holistic assessments are bargained. There are 6 standards of assessment in the state standards that can be bargained. There is too much rhetoric on this issue. We need to take ownership for capacity building. High school principals might be expected to evaluate 100+ teachers in subjects they don't know well. We need to train principals to evaluate effectively with the goal of building capacity. AB5 Fuentes would improve the California State Teachers Professional Standards (CSTPs). We need to bargain student achievement goals.

Q: How do we design an effective teacher evaluation system? Do we want a system to make personnel decisions (hire & fire) or to build professional practice (improve teachers and build capacity)?

A: Sherry: We need the ability to fire an ineffective teacher if professional development isn't going to work.

A: Kathy: It should increase teacher capacity.

A: Dennis: How do we get and develop quality teachers?

A: Lori: Evaluation systems need to grow with teachers. Our goals at 3 years should be different than our goals at 15 years.

Q: Now on to CCSS and SBAC. What is the purpose of a state evaluation system and what key components should it include. What about the issue of matrix sampling (see description below) vs. individual student scores?

Matrix sampling: If you ask each student the same 50 questions, you can't test broader or deeper knowledge. So each student takes a sampling of 50 questions out of a larger group of questions. Each student does only 50, but on a statistical basis, you can see how well a school does overall. This isn't a good way to get individual results, but is effective over larger groups to get overall results.

A: Kathy: Tests should be formative (The goal of formative assessment is to *monitor student learning* to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning.) and summative (The goal of summative assessment is to *evaluate student learning* at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark.). We worry that test results will be used inappropriately, as a way to evaluate teachers when the tests weren't designed for that purpose. Tests should be available to allow students, parents, and teachers to see how a student is doing. Matrix sampling is better for educators to focus locally. We need a system to track students to see how they do over time.

A: Lori: She asked us what we, as parents in the audience, thought. The audience all agreed that our teachers know how our students are doing and we don't need individual results of state testing. CTA is happy our state got the waiver so our teachers can focus on transitioning to CCSS without a test that doesn't match content hanging over their heads.

A: Dennis: We need balance.

Q: The budget has a 3 year plan to phase out Prop 98 deferrals. This year the governor proposes to do it all in one year which is a cash flow accounting trick. This limits our ability to restore cuts. If there is additional money in May, what should the legislature do with it?

A: Dennis: We like the original plan to pay it all off by 2015-16. We want more CCSS implementation investment. The \$200 per student we received was used well, but fell short of needs. LCFF base grant increases would be best. Reimbursing us for \$5 billion in unpaid mandates would be better. We fear the legislature will spend it all, and not spend it well. It's too conservative to pay off the deferrals now.

A: Kathy: Adequacy is the #1 issue! Though funding has increased, it still isn't enough. We need cuts restored. We would like to reach LCFF targets early. We would like additional funding for CCSS implementation, and for TK.

A: Lori: We like the faster payment, but if there are additional funds we would like more money for CCSS implementation.

A: Sherry: Put the money towards CCSS implementation, professional development, and technology needs. Mandates need money. One time only money should be spent on one time only uses, such as investments in technology. We also need to fund our pension liabilities.

Q: Bond, debt bond... How high a priority is putting a bond on the ballot? How concerned are you with adding to the wall of debt?

A: Lori: We are concerned with voter reaction. What does polling say? There is need, but it must be weighed against state capacity and voter support. We don't want to run a bond that will fail.

A: Dennis: We need it but the governor says we should get out of the bond business. There is good debt vs. bad debt. School bonds are good debt. 30 year old schools are still in use, and school construction creates jobs and is good for the economy. Yes, we need a bond.

A: Kathy: We need to replenish our matching funds ability. It's too big of a lift for local agencies to accomplish on their own without state help. TK requires new facilities and we will need a bond to accomplish that.

A: Sherry: We need a bond, but with the recent passage of Prop 30 and the timing, we need to determine if there is the political will to get a bond passed.

Rick: there was a lot of agreement here! Thank you.

Tuesday, March 18, 2014

Craig Cheslog, from the Superintendent of Public Instruction's Initiatives Office

Superintendent Torlikson is happy we are here. There is a lot of change happening now all at the same time with LCFF, CCSS, LCAPs, & SBAC. But we are facing better challenges than the cuts of the past several years. The superintendent hears a sense of hope now. He likes that parents are more involved and play a bigger role now. The increased parent engagement will result in better schools. The changes are like a home renovation, a bit messy with some unexpected challenges along the way, but you're happy with the new house when it's finished. To help with the transition we applied for and received a waiver to have no state testing or API scores for this year.

What do we need to have great schools? We need to restore the arts and have STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math) courses. This will engage students and lower dropout rates. Torlikson wants schools more like they were when he taught. We need a focus on critical thinking skills, collaboration and teamwork, redirection with failure (students can learn from failures as well as successes). This will prepare students for 21st century skills for jobs we don't even know about yet.

Getting back to 2007-08 funding levels is the goal of LCFF, but it shouldn't be our ultimate goal. In 2007-08 we were 47th in the nation for funding. We want to aim for the top 5. Don't forget the *Getting Back to Facts* study. Those suggestions didn't happen. They said we needed additional funding and then we cut funding. But it is good to be thinking about what to restore instead of what to cut. Our #1 goal is what is right for our students.

CDE BREAK OUT SESSIONS

Career and College Readiness

Carolyn Zachry, Career Technical Education Administration Office

Report by Jan Campbell, Huntington Union Council PTA

- The fastest growth among occupations is for jobs that require an associate's degree or post-secondary vocational award
- There are 29 million "middle jobs" in the US that pay \$35,000 or more on average that don't require a Bachelor's degree (but require some post-secondary education)
- The American Career Technical Education system uses an applied learning method of teaching of occupation specific skills
- Harvard study "Pathways to Prosperity" found that 27% of people with Post-secondary licenses or certificates, earn more than the average bachelor degree recipient (plus they don't incur the costs of a 4 year degree)
- A focus on college readiness alone doesn't equip young people with all the skills they need to succeed in the workplace, they need life skills as well
- In Career Education in Ca. there are 58 CTE pathways across 15 industry sectors (ex. transportation, health science, hospitality) that can be explored
- The Ca. Career Resource Network (CalCRN) provides career development resources including free career exploration and planning resources focusing on middle school and high school students
- On CalCRN website the **Ca. Career Zone** which is a web-based Career exploration system where students can answer questions to determine how much money they need to make to have a certain lifestyle
- In July of 2013 AB86 was passed creating the **Ca. Careers Pathway Trust**. \$250 million is being made available to school districts, charter schools, county superintendents of schools and community college districts in the form of one-time competitive grants. Funds are available for K-14 programs.
- Goal is to provide new pathways for Career College Readiness Programs with High Schools Community Colleges, community organizations and businesses working together

- As part of LCFF and LCAP, Districts are required to continue to support ROP programs at the current level for a period of two years. Following that, Districts will have the flexibility to make changes as desired.

**Early Learning
Laura Bridges & Maria Balakshin**

Report by Katie Calkins - Capistrano Unified Council PTSA

CDE Early Learning Resources

Laura Bridges is a Child Development Consultant for the California Department of Education (CDE), Early Education & Support Division (EESD). She provides leadership and oversight of key early childhood publications for the state of CA, which include:

- Learning Foundations (research based) for Infant/Toddler and Preschool
- Curriculum frameworks that are aligned to these foundations
- California Professional Development System for Early Childhood Professionals
- EESD Eight Overarching Principles
- Early Childhood Educator Competencies that reflect Overarching Principles

Multiple websites provide state-wide training programs, including guidelines that are incorporated into college training and degree programs, but not mandated by the state.

A key element throughout all resources is **Family Engagement** ...establishing a trusting relationship that helps parents overcome hurdles in teaching and advocating for their children. Support is provided for English learners and other special needs families. Efforts are made to provide publications in multiple languages.

Note: Research shows early learning significantly enhances brain development.

Race to the Top Learning Challenge Grant

Maria Balakshin works in the Early Education & Support Division of the California Department of Education. She is working on the administration of the Race to the Top Learning Challenge, a federal four year grant whose goal is to improve the quality of early learning programs for children age 0-5. California is one of nine states to qualify for the grant in the first round. California will receive over \$75M over 4 years, between Jan 2012 and Dec 2015. The program includes 16 counties, supporting 17 leadership consortia. These are stakeholders (such as First 5 and County Offices of Education) in community based efforts to establish quality rating systems for the evaluation and improvement of existing early learning programs.

A “work group” was established to determine how “family engagement” (i.e. meaningful interactions, true partnerships etc.) in early childhood learning can be measured. **Strengthening Families** was recommended, a flexible and adaptive approach that teaches early learning providers (licensed public and private pre schools, infant/toddler programs etc) how to interact and build partnerships with parents and families. It is research based, and founded in a child development background.

A five tier rating process is now being piloted, which leads to an improvement plan. Providers are encouraged to use the Strengthening Families framework, which has been adopted by the Dept. of Ed, as well as a number of other social services agencies. This allows for continuity in common language and concepts to which providers and parents will be exposed.

Participation in the Race to the Top (RTT) grant is voluntary. An RTT online overview course is available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/rt>

Please see the following handouts from this presentation:

- Improving Young Children’s Success: California RTT Early Learning Challenge
- Strengthening Families: The Protective Factors Framework
- Core Functions of Strengthening Families Implementation

**LOCAL CONTROL FUNDING FORMULA (LCFF)
BY ELISA WYNNE, LCFF PROJECT MANAGER FOR THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Report by Theresa Blankenstein, Los Alamitos Council PTA

Ms. Elisa Wynne began by explaining that the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) went into effect this school year (the 2013-2014 fiscal year) and the intent is for it to be fully funded in the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

The LCFF greatly simplifies state funding for local education agencies (LEAs). (Note that LEAs include school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools.) Funding is determined by taking the:

- Per Student Base Amount
- + Adjustment for Grade Level
- + Adjustment for Demographics (Low Income, English Learner, and/or Foster Youth)
- = Funding

The LCFF fundamentally changes California’s education system. The old system was based on a compliance model and the new system is an empowerment model that focuses on student achievement. (See page 3 of the presentation report for additional information).

The State Board of Education’s LCFF Major Implementation Tasks (actions needed to support implementation) include:

- 1) Emergency spending regulations by January 31, 2014 (which are in effect now);
- 2) Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) template by March 31, 2014 (the public comment period closed on March 17, 2014); and
- 3) Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) evaluation rubric by October 1, 2015 (this will include tools that a district can use to self-assess, a county office of education can use to support a school district, and the state superintendent can use to intervene in a school district.)

School districts are required to turn their LCAPs in by July 1, 2014. The state has not measured a lot of these items before. They are in the initial stages of putting together work groups on these issues.

A Plan for LCFF Coherence

Regulations – *Define* – Clarify key terms and conditions to support local implementation that achieves LCFF implementation objectives.

Templates – *Organize and Communicate* – Demonstrate through the development and sharing of the LCAP that local implementation supports LCFF implementation objectives and regulations.

Rubric – *Assess and Indicate Assistance* – Provide a process for assessing performance and identifying assistance based on review of the LCAP that meets specific areas of need related to LCFF implementation objectives and regulations.

Connecting Elements/Guiding Principles

- Performance-focused – relationship between plans, funding use, and outcomes for students;
- Simplicity and transparency;
- Student-focused – local identification of needs, provides equitable opportunity;
- State priorities – define metrics, but rely on local determination of measurement; and
- Stakeholder engagement – parents, community, and educators.

Adopted LCFF Spending Regulations

- 1) Calculation of proportionality percentage – three data sources – LCFF targets, prior year expenditures, and statewide implementation percentage;
- 2) Clarification of “district wide, countywide, charter-wide, school-wide” – threshold and explanation; and
- 3) Oversight and assignment of assistance by county offices of education for districts.

Districts can use the formula to calculate out spending approximately. The school district ‘backs’ into the funding amount by using the guidelines to figure out the amount of funding spent in previous years on ‘unduplicated’ students and then adds to that amount the additional funding received from the state. (Note that the term “unduplicated” refers to the idea that you count each student one time. For example, a student that is low income, and an English learner, and a foster youth would be counted one time and not three times in the formula). County offices of education will check if the districts are meeting the regulations immediately and the Department of Education is working very closely with the county offices of education on this issue. The school districts should be working to best meet the needs of their unduplicated students.

Adopted Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)

This is a communication and accountability tool.

- Encourages telling a story of support, impact, and improvement;
- Emphasis on good planning, communication, and engagement; and
- Organization:
 - a) Stakeholder engagement;
 - b) Goals and progress indicators; and
 - c) Actions, services, and expenditures.

State Priorities in the LCAP

- Conditions of Learning:
 - Basics: Teachers appropriately assigned and fully credentialed, student access to standards-aligned instructional materials, and school facilities maintained in good repair (Priority 1);
 - State Standards: Implementation of state-adopted academic content and performance standards (Priority 2); and
 - Course Access: Student enrollment in a broad course of study (Priority 7).
- Pupil Outcomes:
 - Pupil Achievement: Student performance on standardized assessments, college and career readiness, English learner reclassification, AP assessments, etc. (Priority 4); and
 - Other Pupil Outcomes: Outcomes for students in other subject areas (Priority 8).
- Engagement:
 - Parent Involvement: Efforts to seek parent input in decision making, promotion of parent participation in programs for unduplicated pupils and special needs subgroups (Priority 3);
 - Pupil Engagement: School attendance rates, chronic absenteeism rates, middle school dropout rates, high school dropout rates, and high school graduation rates (Priority 5); and
 - School Climate: Pupil suspension and expulsion rates, and other local measures including surveys of pupils, parents, and teachers on the sense of safety and school connectedness (Priority 6).

(Also see page 11 of the presentation report for a one-page overview of these LCFF State Priorities and Related Data Elements).

LCAP Section 1: Stakeholder Engagement

- Describe in the LCAP the process used to engage the community, including meeting requirements of statute, in developing the LCAP;
- Describe how this engagement contributed to the development of the LCAP; and
- Local education agencies must still describe goals and actions around the state priorities of parent involvement and pupil engagement, which must be detailed in sections 2 and 3.

LCAP Section 2 and 3: Goals and Progress Indicators

- Set goals (annual and long term) around state and local priorities;
- Identify metrics for measuring progress towards goals;
- Review past progress and adjust if necessary; and
- Local education agencies must create goals for all school sites and subgroups identified in Education Code Section 52052, but may group and describe these goals together as appropriate.

LCAP Section 3 (A) and (B): Actions, Services, and Expenditures

- Identify actions and services to support the goals;
- Identify expenditures to support the actions and services and describe where these expenditures are included in the local education agency's budget;
- Review past progress and adjust if necessary;
- Section (A) requires that actions, services and expenditures be identified for all students; and
- Section (B) requires that actions, services and expenditures be identified for English learners, low income pupils, foster youth, and redesignated fluent English proficient pupils that are beyond what is provided for all pupils.

LCAP Section 3 (C) and (D): Actions, Services, and Expenditures

Section 3 (C) and (D) are where the local education agency specifically describes how it is meeting the requirements of the regulations (5 CCR 15496).

- Section (C) requires the local education agency to describe the amount of supplemental and concentrations funds estimated for the LCAP year, describe how they are expending the funds, and for those funds they are using in a district wide, school wide, countywide, or charter wide manner, provide the explanations required by the regulations (5 CCR 15496(b)); and
- Section (D) requires the local education agency to describe how they calculated their proportionality percentage and how they are increasing or improving services for unduplicated students above what they are doing for all students by this percentage (5 CCR 15496(a)).

Implementation of LCFF

- Local education agencies will develop budgets and plans in 2014-2015 reflecting LCFF funding and structures.
 - Spending regulations will guide expenditure planning; and
 - LCAP will share story – explain how resources contribute to goals, demonstrate equity, and support transparency and simplicity.
- Governor's Budget substantially builds on LCFF implementation.

LCFF Basics, Text of Regulations, and a Downloadable, Editable LCAP Template can be found at www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/.

Additional information, including LCFF Channel Videos, can be found at lcff.wested.org.

This report was presented by Elisa Wynne at Ewynne@cde.ca.gov.

Following her presentation, Ms. Wynne took questions from the PTA members in attendance.

Question: Parents are excited about the opportunity to provide input, but what if their input is not included in the final plan?

Answer: The governing board must take input and provide a response, but does not have to change the plan. School districts will be evaluated based on student outcomes.

Ms. Wynne also noted that they are working on putting together California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (set up in statute) and districts will be able to contract with them to receive additional support.

The county offices of education will be checking this year for completeness, that the LCAP ties to expenditures, and that the school district is meeting regulations. In the next year, the county offices of education must also offer technical assistance if the school district fails in student outcomes.

Question: If the county office of education disapproves of the plan, they will send a letter to the board. Will the county office of education share this letter of disapproval with parents?

Answer: Ms. Wynne said that she was not sure and would ask regarding this issue.

Ms. Wynne also noted that departments are working together to match foster youth students under the Department of Social Services with the CALPADS system for Free and Reduced Lunch. They have achieved an 86% match to date. School districts will be informed how many foster youth they have, but the individual students will not be identified.

Question: Do you have to address all eight goals every year?

Answer: The plan can indicate that “not much is being done in this area; the focus is on this area instead.”

Ms. Wynne also said that the local education agencies (including school districts) are monitored by the county offices of education, and the state monitors the county offices of education.

**Creating a Safe, Supporting, and Engaging School Climate
Presented by Tom Herman, Manager Coordinated School Health and Safety Office, CDE**

Report by: Sue Hill, Capistrano Unified Council PTSA

Will changing school climate elevate outcomes for students?

Eleven states, including California, were selected to receive a federal 4-year safe and supportive schools (S3) grant to measure school climate and how it affects students. This grant supports efforts to improve school climate and safety in high schools with greatest need, build data driven decision-making capacity, and integrate school climate into API. This grant is no longer funded.

School Climate encompasses a multitude of factors some negative; such as, gangs, rumors, bullying, disengaged students, truancy, etc. and positive such as engaged students, cooperative atmosphere, motivated students, and rigorous learning environment.

Qualities of a positive school climate include:

- #1. High Expectations for all students.
- #2. Caring relationships between students and staff
- #3. Meaningful participation of students—where the students are leading not simply participating.

Mr. Herman recommends making kids get involved in making rules and understanding the reasons why the rules exist. Don't tell them. Help them discover.

Positive school climates focus on rigor, relevance, and relationships.

The condition and quality of learning environment affect student attitudes.

Improving school climate was found to improve academic outcomes for students. Also, mental health improved, graduation and attendance rates improved, and self-esteem among students was lifted. Problem behaviors were reduced. In addition, a positive school climate results in better retention rates and more job satisfaction among staff.

There is a strong correlation between API scores and the school climate index. The higher the school's climate is ranked, the higher the school's API score and visa versa. Mr. Herman pointed out that although the study showed a strong correlation between school climate and API, causation has not been proved.

Priority #6 of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) addresses the issue of school climate specifically. Several other priorities within LCAP have an indirect association with school climate as parental and staff engagement is important components in school climate.

Improving school climate will also assist in addressing some of the non-cognitive skills targeted in the Common Core standards. Improving these Common Core aligned non-cognitive skills, such as negotiation, empathy, delayed gratification, critical thinking, communication, problem solving and persistence will not only contribute to a better school climate; but also, these skills contribute to lifelong success.

The study found a strong correlation between a school's academic achievement, as measured through its API score, and the school's demographics. Higher populations of certain sub-groups typically resulted in higher API scores while higher numbers of other sub-groups resulted in lower API scores.

Some of the grant monies received by the state of California were used to conduct the Healthy Kids Survey that gathered information from middle and high schools across California to study the effects of school climate on students' success. The results of this survey were used to produce the report "A Climate for Academic Success." This study identified certain schools as "Beating the Odds" for consistently performing better than predicted on standardized tests given the demographics of the student population. The study concluded that the "Beating the Odds" schools had significantly higher school climate indexes than the underperforming schools and that school climate was more strongly associated with beating the odds than student demographics or personnel resources.

Improving school climate is not expensive but has a big payoff.

A study of 9th graders in California showed that:

30% reported being bullied,

30% don't feel safe at school

30% have used drugs or alcohol within the past 30 days,

30% feel chronic sadness,

30% cannot identify at least one caring adult at school,

30% believe that no teachers or adult at school believes that they will be a success (low expectations).

Only 35% report doing things that make a difference in the school (meaningful participation.)

For students to fulfill promise they need to feel loved but also they require high expectations.

One effective strategy to help 9th graders feel more connected to school is through the "Link Crew" program, which connects freshman with seniors.

In April the US Dept of Ed is expected to release another competitive grant - the School Transformation Grant. California will be a good candidate for this grant, which will allow the state to continue the work it has done under the Safe and Supportive school program.

Mr. Herman recommends that we encourage all districts to take the Healthy Kids Survey and have it analyzed by West Ed. He believes the cost is relatively inexpensive and the information essential.

The study showed that student academic achievement increased (measured by increases in the API) through using school climate intervention strategies lowering violence, substance abuse, and bullying on campus. Also, improving student engagement results in fewer truancies and students challenging the system.

One successful lower cost solution is to hire a school climate coordinator to arrange teacher in-service and other intervention strategies. Another efficient strategy is to have more events that invite parents to the school to view student performances or presentations.

Top 5 strategies to improve school climate

1. Bullying workshops
2. PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)
3. RTI (Response to Intervention)
4. Connecting seniors with freshmen through Link-crew, et al.
5. Peer court—students decide consequences.

The Healthy School Survey is no longer required but districts can use LCAP money to fund the study. Mr. Herman recommends talking to your school district about completing a Healthy School Survey as part of its LCAP process.

More information is available on these websites:

Safe and Supportive Schools: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/safesupportive.asp>

Healthy Kids Survey: <https://chks.wested.org/>

Deborah Baumgartner, Administrator of the Assessment Development and Administration Division (testing)

She talked about the California student assessment system overview. We adopted CCSS in August 2010, in June 2011 we joined SBAC, Jan 2013 the recommendations from the Department of Education were delivered to the legislature which resulted in AB484 (Bonilla) which led to CAASPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress in Oct 2013. We did pilot tests in 2013, and now are doing field tests this spring. Field tests test the test itself and the value of the testing system and test questions. They also allow the LEAs (Local Education Agencies) to test their facilities and capacity to conduct the test on a large scale, and take a practice run.

45 states had adopted CCSS for Math & English Language. Our state led the way in letting the old test go so teachers aren't forced to juggle old and new standards. 24 states are in the SBAC, and teachers have been involved in all aspects of the test development.

The CASPP includes multiple tests: SBAC for math & English, CST for science (working on new standards and test to be introduced 2016), CMA (California Modified Assessment) for special needs and others. There will be accommodations for special needs students.

Q: How will we handle parents who await test results and want to see those numbers? A: Parents need to take a breather. No API scores either. Teachers are not being evaluated on the new test this year. Next year we will form baseline scores, but not APIs until we have more information. We are still working out what factors should be included in APIs.

The new assessment includes more writing and the need for a better explanation of your knowledge. You must share information in a different way. Written portions of tests will be scored by trained test readers in each state. There was a slide with the required assessments for 2013-14 that weren't waived.

This year we are testing the test, not the students. So there will be no scores sent home to families because that is not the purpose of this test. The test is specifically not timed. There are estimates on how long the test should take, but students should be given the time they need. Also, there is a 6 week window to complete testing. The field test is about 50 questions and we estimate it will take around 3 ½ hours.

Our state went out and observed 100s of sites during the pilot and many changes were made based on those observations. For example, we added volume control when we realized there was no mechanism for students to adjust the volume. The field test includes the changes.

Old tests were more about ABC memorization, but now they are more about demonstrating knowledge. There is a 3 year window to allow schools to give pencil and paper tests to allow them to phase in the technology. The field test isn't adaptive because it is still choosing questions and levels for questions. The actual test will be adaptive (change difficulty to match student performance). This allows struggling kids to be tested at a more appropriate level. It will also challenge the GATE kids who found the tests easy, it will no longer be a synch for them. The state will create a system to follow students over time to see growth and progress.

The field test runs from March 25 – June 6. It is a hybrid of Math and English with several types of questions:

*Selected response: choose ABCD type of questions, but can have more than one selection that is correct, not just one right answer, but you must select a few to be correct.

*Constructed answer: short answer that can be a word, short sentence or a number.

*Technology enhanced: can include click and drag, edit text, or draw an object. Must complete an action.

*Performance task: This is a larger writing, persuasive style essay. Includes two components. First the class does an activity together and discusses it, then the student will be asked to write based on the activity.

Q: Where can I find more information about this? A: by Shanin Ziemer, social media chair for 4th District PTA: Our 4th district has a Facebook page with links to sample tests and information about these topics. You should friend us on Facebook and you would get this information. The way Facebook is set up, you have to like posts by a group in order to see them in your newsfeed. So visit our page and like the posts to see more of our posts. We put up a lot of useful information. A: Deborah: The state is creating pamphlets with information in English and Spanish to get out to parents. The state website is www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/smaterfieldtest.asp

Nancy Brownell, Senior Fellow at the California State Board and the Department of Education

She discussed CCSS. Our standards are always increasing. In the 70s and 80s our goals were to establish minimum competencies. In the 90s and 00s we worked towards proficiency in standards. Now we are working towards college and career readiness.

When you use your mind well and learn, it is invisible and we want to show it. CCSS is knowing and doing at a new level. It includes projects. No more just finding the right answer, now you must also explain why it's right or why it's better. The big ideas of CCSS are English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. With ELA we are building literacy. Students will see more informational text and read to use as evidence and build academic vocabulary. Text will increase in complexity with grade levels. Informational text is now about 50% of reading and will increase to about 75%. In real life, college and career, you read informational texts. Students will be reading for content, comprehension, and to display knowledge. There will be more persuasive writing requiring evidence from the text. Less creative 'tell a story' writing. More summarize the evidence and persuasive. Evidence is key!

In Math, there are fewer standards, but they go to more depth. Also they follow a more logical progression which allows students to make links between concepts. We will focus more on rigor which includes concepts, fluency, applications and explanations. Math will be more deliberate and intentional rather than just repetitive. Math will have content standards at each level, but the practice standards are the same at every level:

- 1) Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- 2) Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
- 3) Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
- 4) Model with mathematics.
- 5) Use appropriate tools strategically.

- 6) Attend to precision.
- 7) Look for and make use of structure.
- 8) Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

40% of High School districts are going with the integrated math model (reorganizing the order of teaching but teaching the same content). The rest are going with the current (traditional) model. Integrated is tied to CCSS and is better aligned with SBAC, so traditional model will need to change some. CCSS is primarily for K-8 standards, grades 7&8 will be integrated. So there is a challenge of how to transition for high schools going traditional. The content is mostly the same, the change is in the order we teach and how we group items (chunking).

The ACT & SAT are reworking to align with the CCSS. College A-G requirements are adjusting too. As are AP tests. They are phasing in the changes.

DOK (Depth of Knowledge) is a reference to the complexity of mental processing that must occur to answer a question, perform a task, or generate a product. CCSS & SBAC will require higher DOKs.

DOK levels:

- 1) Recall: Recall of a fact, information, or procedure
- 2) Skill/Concept: Use information or conceptual knowledge, two or more steps, etc.
- 3) Strategic Thinking: Requires reasoning, developing a plan or a sequence of steps, some complexity, more than one possible answer.
- 4) Extended Thinking: Requires an investigation, time to think and process multiple conditions of the problem.

The role of technology can't be overstated. Digital literacy is central and essential. Students must learn to find, use, and judge information they find online and learn how to use tech wisely. They must be able to get information, weigh it, summarize it, synthesize and report on it.

The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are being developed and will replace the CST standards in 2016.

Legislator Visits, Key Messages

We introduced ourselves and told our legislators a few key pieces of information about 4th District PTA (We represent Orange County and a bit of LA county, more than half a million students in more than 400 schools, with over 130,000 members.) Also that we have 80 unpaid volunteers in the capitol today advocating on behalf of children. The state legislative conference was just a few weeks ago, so our legislators had recently heard from PTA volunteers specifically about funding issues, so we decided to discuss a few issues that weren't discussed previously.

We went to our legislatures with 3 key issues. Here is a summary of what we discussed:

- 1) TK, investing in early childhood education reaps huge benefits and is proven to be powerfully effective at improving student outcome.
- 2) Reducing truancy, reduced truancy reduces crime, improves student performance, and reduces dropout rates.
- 3) CCSS implementation, fully support CCSS implementation, we need professional development for our teachers and the technology needed for curriculum and the SBAC, as well as updated instructional materials.

We also did gently remind them that the goal of a fully implemented CCSS is still only to get back to 2007-08 funding levels.

Bonus! Jennifer Fearing, the Humane Society California Senior State Director
(speaking to 33rd District's PTA Sac Safari about effective advocacy)

Advocacy can let you get ahead of a problem and affect social change. She started as a local volunteer and saw needs, learned from others, talked to press and worked out of love as a citizen advocate. She recently made the news when she walked the governor's dog and some of her political adversaries accused her of giving the governor a gift (there are rules against accepting gifts from lobbyists). There is something called the neighborliness exemption, where it is ok if you are doing something more along the lines of being a helpful neighbor than giving a gift. So she didn't actually break a law, but she got a lot of publicity.

You can change the world by forming partnerships, investing in, and working with corporations. We invested in companies to allow us to attend the board meetings and advocate on issues important to us. Keep context in mind when you advocate. Realize what is happening around you. When you have a successful vote, leverage that success. "Hey, did you realize that 60% of your voters cared about this issue? Let me tell you about some other issues ... "

Money is a big issue, what can we do outside of money? Some changes don't cost much money, be cognizant of costs. For example, we got a regulation passed that requires all hunting shot to be lead free. Another big change we were able to make was just changing the name use of the word game to wildlife in the state, so the California Department of Fish & Game became the Department of Fish & Wildlife. Fish and Game Agents became Wildlife Rangers. Remember that it is important to build relationships with regulatory agencies, not just legislators. In the case of PTA, we have the Department of Education and Board of Education.

When you get a law passed, that is just like half time at a game. There are still appeals, writing regulations, and enforcement. Bills in the legislature legitimize your issues and start a public conversation when they get attention. There are several types of advocacy: Peer to peer, protest or boycott, community education, political/legislative (which is our focus tonight).

A key factor in advocacy is being ready to take an opportunity and moving to take advantage of it. For example, she tweeted a picture of the then head of the Fish and Game Department holding a mountain lion he had shot after letting dogs tree it. They release dogs, and while the dogs chased the lion for hours, they sat in a cabin and drank and watched sports. The dogs had tracking collars on that relayed to them when they had quit moving, so they all hopped on their ATVs and rode to the tree and shot the exhausted and trapped lion. There was no sporting in it and it made huge news. She was able to take that momentum and get a bill passed that outlawed using dogs to hunt lions & bears in the state of California. It wasn't an issue she was even looking at prior to the opportunity, but she jumped on it when the chance arose.

Build a coalition, and get others to engage and support you and set realistic goals. Small changes can create meaningful impacts. Use your assets. I have dogs and cute puppy pictures, but you have children! "Creativity counts for a lot". Use what you can to get your issue noticed in a sea of bills that legislators see. Make a connection in a creative way if you can. She has found puppies for several people around the capital to adopt. Be personal, real, and specific when telling your story to your legislator. And don't be afraid to leave that awkward pause after you ask them a question. Wait for them to answer after you make your ask. Kids are great at it, and legislators love to have kids come in.

Read the book *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Carnegie. It has a lot of useful tips on getting people to like you. People liking you makes them want to participate and be on your team.

The art of persuasion:

- Don't criticize, condemn, or complain.
- Show honest and sincere appreciation.
- Admire, ask, then offer to help. Look around their office, it tells you a lot about what they think is important. Google them and get to know something about them before you meet them.

- Smile, it's disarming.
- Be conversational and helpful. Talk about local issues and start off with friendly conversation and work up to the ask.
- Make them feel important and do it sincerely. Address them using their title, be respectful.
- Respect opinions, even if you disagree.
- Find common ground and frame "yes" questions to get them nodding, keep them nodding.
- Understand people and talk from their viewpoint.
- Praise, appreciate, then gently correct.
- Don't punish, reward.
- Give them a reputation to live up to. Keep a score card so you can praise them for how well they've voted with you. Send them personal letters with praise. Write letters to the editor in support of their bills (this is also a reward).

Lobbying tips:

- Show respect to staff.
- Identify yourself by name and organization.
- Thank you first for past votes, find what they did right.
- Be clear, concise, and short/brief. Be prepared and plan your visit ahead.
- Refer to bills by their number and name, e.g. AB1444 (Weber).
- Provide a fact sheet and explain the personal significance.
- Listen to their comment and questions, be sure to leave time in visit to listen.
- Take notes & follow up with answers to questions.
- "I don't know" is a perfectly acceptable answer.
- Always follow up with staff after a meeting.
- Send a handwritten thank you card to anyone who is helpful.
- Develop a relationship with key influential members (like committee heads).

How to most effectively engage your legislators:

- In order of effectiveness: Visit, hand write a letter, call, email.
- Attend public meetings and meet with your legislator in their office.
- Respond to action alerts of key allies (be careful & pick well)
- Offer yourself as a resource. They rarely take you up on it, but it is a good gesture even so.
- Have fun, it helps if you smile.
- Be creative, it counts.
- There is power in personal stories. Be compelling.
- There is only one goal, getting the vote. Always keep that in mind.

You have power, don't be afraid to use it!