

Talking Points for Legislative Chairs, June 2014

Details are in the June issue of the *Advocacy Communicator*.

- Governor Brown issued his May revise, the new version of his state budget proposal based on the actual amount of revenue that the state has taken in (as opposed to his January proposal, which is based on estimates). The state has taken in about \$2.4 billion more than it had expected, but that didn't change the Governor's proposal for school funding by much. He still wants to use a big chunk of the revenues to pay off the money that the state owes to school districts for previous years.
- The Governor also wants to start putting more money into the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS). Not enough money has been put into this fund for many years, and in the 2008 market crash CalSTRS lost a lot in its investments. An additional \$79 billion is needed to pay pensions in the future. Gov. Brown wants the state, the teachers and school districts to pay more into CalSTRS, starting this coming year. That would mean school districts would have just a few weeks to figure out how to pay the higher amount, while they are still trying to recover from the budget cuts of the past several years. California State PTA has sent a letter to the Governor asking him to reconsider this plan because it would take too much money away from student services and programs.
- The state legislators have to complete their version of the budget by June 15. If the Governor receives the budget on time, he has to sign or reject it by June 30.
- Last month we talked about SB 837, which would have required school districts to establish Transitional Kindergarten programs for all four-year-olds. The author of the bill has now scaled that back so that prekindergarten would be offered only to four-year-olds from low income families. About 234,000 low-income children would get a quality preschool program. California State PTA supports this bill. It has been passed by the State Senate and is now headed to the Assembly for debate.
- At the federal level, the Strong Start for Children Act, which would provide grants to states for high-quality preschool programs, was approved by a Senate Committee. National PTA supports this bill.
- The California State Legislature is considering a \$9 billion school facilities bond. Funding from the previous state school bond has run out and there's still a lot of work to be done. The new bond was approved by the Assembly, and if it is passed by the Senate, it will go on the November ballot. California State PTA supports the bond, but Gov. Brown does not like this method of paying for school construction. He would like to revise school construction funding in a way that would leave the state out of it.
- The dates for Fourth District PTA Advocacy activities are in the Communicator. Does your unit or council have a line item in your budget for Sacramento Safari?
- This isn't in the Communicator (because the editor ran out of room) but California State PTA is now supporting AB 215, which would streamline the dismissal process for teachers in cases of egregious behavior. The PTA advocate who is working on this bill thinks it has a good chance of being passed and signed into law.

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