

# Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

JUNE 2015

## California's education budget continues to grow

The good news from Sacramento just keeps coming.

Governor Jerry Brown's May revise budget includes \$6 billion more for K-12 schools than his original proposal in January. This would put K-12 Prop. 98 funding at \$9,978 per pupil—up \$657 (7 percent) from the pre-recession 2007-08 inflation-adjusted level.

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) predicts an even rosier year, with \$3 billion more in total revenues than the Governor predicts. The Senate and Assembly have developed their proposed budgets based on the LAO's higher figures.

Most of the additional money the state is receiving must go to K-12 schools and community colleges due to the requirements of Prop. 98. This is great news for those institutions, but less so for other state programs, including child care, children's health programs, and services for foster children, which are also of concern to PTA.

The Governor's new proposal calls for an additional \$2.1 billion to go towards the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), for a total increase in 2015-16 of \$6.1 billion. He would allocate an additional \$1 billion to finish paying off deferrals, money that the state postponed paying to school districts during the recession. Schools would also get \$3.6 billion in reimbursements for unfunded mandates, up from \$1.1 billion in the Governor's initial proposal. This is money that school districts have already spent in order to follow state regulations. The Governor hopes districts will use the money to help implement Common Core State Standards.

When LCFF was put in place two years ago, it eliminated numerous categorical funds, which could only be used for specific purposes. School districts now get a base amount for every student, with additional funding for students who are low-income, English learners or foster children, and another bonus for districts with a high percentage of those students. Each school district decides how to spend this money by developing a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

Even as districts are adjusting to this new control over their local finances, plans are underway that might establish new funding streams for specific purposes, essentially creating new categoricals.

Even the Governor, who initiated LCFF, is proposing a grant program to support Career Technical Education,

with \$400 million in funding next year, with smaller amounts in the following years. He also asks for \$12 million to provide 2,500 additional pre-school slots, with priority given to children with special needs.

Legislators would like to see funding designated for child care, pre-school, and programs to assist new or struggling teachers. As the implementation of LCFF continues, there is likely to be debate between those who value local control and those who would like to see specific programs implemented in schools.

Circumstances may change when the tax increases authorized by Prop. 30 begin to expire next year. These taxes have added about \$8 billion to the state budget, most of which has gone to education. Gov. Brown also warns that at some point there will be another recession, resulting in a drop in tax revenues.

For now, legislators will be busy drafting a spending plan that the Governor will approve. The state Constitution requires lawmakers to complete the budget by June 15. If the Governor receives the budget on time, he must sign it by June 30.

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## Update on ESEA/NCLB revision

Bills to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), currently known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), have been introduced in Washington, D.C., both by the Senate and the House of Representatives. The House version has stalled.

Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Patty Murray (D-WA), co-authors of the Senate version, hoped to have his bill heard in the Senate by the end of May. That hearing has been pushed back to mid-June.

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## PTA Advocacy Dates for 2015-16

It's never too early to start planning for another exciting year of advocacy with Fourth District PTA. Important dates include:

- **September 25** —Advocacy Training Workshop
- **February 22 and 23** —Sacramento Safari

Ask your PTA to include \$650 in next year's budget for each person you plan to send to Sacramento Safari.

## Delegates approve three resolutions at CAPTA Convention

Three resolutions were debated and approved by delegates at the 2015 California State PTA convention in May. These resolutions are now official positions that state and local PTA can use to advocate and take action.

- **Synthetic Marijuana – Education and Awareness**  
This resolution points to the physical and psychological dangers of synthetic marijuana and the deceptive way it is marketed to teenagers. It urges PTA to promote awareness of these dangers among parents, guardians, school health professionals and public health authorities, and directs California State PTA to support legislation that restricts the purchase, sale, possession and distribution of synthetic marijuana.
- **Climate Change is a Children’s Issue**  
This resolution states that there is broad scientific consensus that the Earth’s climate is warming at an

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### Question remains: Who will pay for school construction and upgrades?

Who will pay for school construction and modernization in the future? That question has yet to be settled.

Up to now, schools have been built primarily with a combination of state and local money. The state dollars came from school facilities bonds, most recently from a \$10.4 billion bond passed by voters in 2006. That fund is now empty.

The legislature attempted to place a new facilities bond on last November’s ballot, but dropped the plan when Governor Brown made it clear that he thinks responsibility for school construction projects should be shifted from the state to school districts in all but a few cases.

This year, several school construction bills have been introduced by state legislators, including SB114 (Liu) and AB 148 (Holden), both of which would put a new school facilities bond on the November 2016 ballot. The amount of the bond is not specified in either bill. AB 1372 (Holden) states the intent of the Legislature to adopt a long-term funding solution for school facilities. California State PTA has a watch position on all of these bills.

Meanwhile, California’s Coalition for Adequate School Funding, an organization of about 350 school districts and construction industry partners, is collecting signatures to place a \$9 billion school bond initiative on the 2016 ballot. CAPTA has not taken a position on this measure.

unusual pace, caused largely by human activities. Children suffer disproportionately from the adverse health effects and will be profoundly impacted as adults. The resolution calls for education on the impacts of climate change and energy literacy, urges school districts to make schools more climate-safe, energy efficient and sustainable, and asks PTA to advocate for local, state and national legislation to reduce man-made contributions to climate change and mitigate its impact on children’s health.

- **LGBTQ+ Inclusiveness in Health Education California**  
This resolution states that lack of awareness and understanding contributes to a higher rate of isolation, depression, and suicidal tendencies among LGBTQ+ individuals. It supports the adoption of standards regarding age-appropriate, medically accurate information on LGBTQ+ issues into the statewide health curriculum. It also asks State PTA to support legislation that creates a safe and accepting environment in schools with updated health education standards that deal with issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

All three resolutions will be submitted to the National PTA for consideration at the national convention. To read the resolutions in their entirety, go to [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org), under Program + Events/Convention.

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### State Senate passes vaccination bill

SB 277 (Pan), which would eliminate most exemptions to the requirement for children to be immunized before they enter public school, has passed the Senate and has been referred to the Assembly Health Committee for consideration. California State PTA supports this bill.

The only exception in the law would be for children who cannot be immunized for medical reasons. Parents who opt not to vaccinate their children would be allowed to home-school them, participate in a multi-family private home school, or enroll their children in a public school independent study program.

The bill must be approved by the Assembly and signed by the governor before it becomes law.

To learn about all of the bills PTA is supporting, go to [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org) and click on Focus Areas/Advocacy.