

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

DECEMBER 2015

ESEA-NCLB reauthorization is close to completion

The long-awaited reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) moved closer to completion in November when a Senate and House conference committee voted 39-1 to approve the framework for a final bill, merging the proposals that each house had previously passed. Both houses of Congress are expected to vote on the joint legislation during the first two weeks of December.

During debate on the framework, several amendments were adopted that would:

- Permit states to limit the amount of time spent on assessments in comparison to time spent on instruction.
- Integrate the arts into STEM efforts to ensure students receive a well-rounded education.
- Allow professional development funds to be used to educate teachers on student data privacy issues.

The original ESEA was enacted in 1965. Until recently, it was revised and renamed about every five years. The current version, titled No Child Left Behind (NCLB), was due for reauthorization in 2007.

National PTA is advocating for improvements to the law that prioritize family engagement, provide educational equity for all children and prepare every child for long-term success.

LAO predicts more funding increases

California's schools can look forward to more funding increases as the state heads into another year of higher revenues, according to predictions by the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office.

With a growing economy and increased tax revenues from Prop. 30, state spending on K-12 schools will go up by \$5.9 billion in 2016-17, the LAO said. This translates into an increase of about \$530 per student.

However, California will still be well below the national average in per pupil spending.

Revenue increases in future years will be more modest, the LAO predicts, with a possible slowing in the economy and the expiration of the Prop. 30 tax increases.

A signature-gathering campaign is underway to extend the personal income tax increases for high-income earners for 12 years. If the campaign is successful, the measure would be on the November 2016 ballot.

The state budget process will begin in January with the presentation of the Governor's proposed budget.

"While this brings us another step closer, it is essential that Congress pass a final bill before the new year that includes a Statewide Family Engagement Centers program and resources to provide states and districts the capacity to support effective implementation of policies and activities that improve student achievement," said National PTA President Laura Bay.



Get ready to go!

Sacramento Safari February 22-23, 2016

- ★ Hear from a variety of experts in public education policy and state government.
- ★ Visit your local legislators in our beautiful State Capitol.
- ★ Network with PTA parents from throughout Orange County.

The cost is about \$650 per person, including hotel stay and travel expenses.

Your PTA unit or council must vote to send you to Safari as a representative.

For more information, contact Kim Anderson at sac-safari@fourthdistrictpta.org

**Register at
www.fourthdistrictpta.org
Registration closes January 29**

**Be sure to attend Sacramento Safari Orientation
Friday, February 5 — 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Fountain Valley School District
10055 Slater Avenue, Fountain Valley**

California voters are concerned about the state's teacher shortage

By Suzanne Gauntlett, Fourth District PTA Advocacy Team

California's registered voters are well aware of the state's emerging teacher shortage and believe that the state should take steps to address this problem, according to a recent poll commissioned by EdSource and the Learning Policy Institute. Results of the poll were released on November 17.

Some findings included:

- 65 percent of registered voters see the importance of encouraging students to enroll in teacher preparation programs.
- 85 percent support forgiving a portion of teachers' college loans and offering more scholarships to those who want to become teachers.
- 52 percent oppose policies that allow schools to address shortages by hiring individuals who have not completed their training.
- 94 percent believe the state should ensure all teachers get rigorous preparation before beginning to teach.
- 88 percent think training should include a year with an expert teacher.
- 90 percent believe teachers should receive mentoring and support during early years of practice with ongoing professional development after earning a credential.
- 58 percent say starting salaries for teachers are too low.
- 51 percent think starting salaries should be commensurate with those earned by other recent college graduates.
- 70 percent would encourage a friend or family member to enter the teaching profession; but respondents under the age of 30 answered this question with a resounding "No!"
- 70 percent believe it's important to have a racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse teaching force.
- 63 percent believe the fact that public schools in low-income communities have fewer qualified teachers than schools in wealthier communities is a "very serious" problem.

The poll found that Democrats and women voters from diverse backgrounds are most likely to be concerned about the state's teacher shortage and are more supportive than other groups of having the state take action.

There are also substantial differences among voters depending on their race and ethnicity: 82 percent of African-Americans, 72 percent of Latinos and 68 percent of Asian-Americans believe the teacher shortage is a "very serious" problem, compared to 57 percent of white non-Hispanics. Similarly, these groups think it is "extremely

important" for the state to do more to encourage young people to enroll in teacher preparation programs.

There were three important findings in general about teacher longevity:

1. Teachers who have good mentoring programs stay in the profession at much higher rates than those who do not.
2. Better prepared teachers stay in the profession longer.
3. Working conditions and "principal leadership" are key factors.

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Forum

Inside Orange County's School Districts

Superintendents from four local school districts will talk about how their districts are handling issues such as Local Control Accountability Plans, state assessments, budget challenges, teacher training, California State Standards and parent involvement.

Friday, January 22

9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

**Fountain Valley School District
10055 Slater Avenue, Fountain Valley**

All PTA members are welcome to attend.

SDUSD creates school funding model

San Diego Unified School District recently unveiled a funding model to calculate how much money it needs to ensure student success and close the achievement gap in its schools. The model was developed following a year-long study as part of the district's Local Control Accountability Plan.

SDUSD found it would need an additional \$3,250 per student. This would allow the district to extend the school year by about 80 hours, lower class size in all grades, expand programs that it has found effective, and add counselors, nurses, language specialists and other staff. It would also bring the district up to the national average for per student funding, up from 46th in the nation.

SDUSD officials say they will share the investment tool with other California districts and that they hope their efforts will result in legislative action to address funding gaps.