

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

JANUARY 2016

President signs Every Student Succeeds Act to replace NCLB

After years of failed attempts, the revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was approved by bipartisan votes in both houses of Congress and signed into law by President Barack Obama in December, bringing an end to the era of No Child Left Behind.

The new version of the law is called the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA. Both National PTA and California State PTA commend the new act, which shifts responsibility for school success back to the states and acknowledges the essential role of family engagement to student achievement.

“The Every Student Succeeds Act is a marked improvement over previous law and provides great opportunity to strengthen family engagement in education and ensure all students reach their full potential,” said National PTA President Laura Bay.

The new law eliminates both NCLB’s goal of 100 percent student proficiency and punitive measures for schools that did not meet their targets. Each state will be allowed to set its own goals for schools and districts, determine how to measure progress, and decide how to fix the lowest-performing schools. ESSA also limits the power of the U.S. Secretary of Education and prohibits the federal Department of Education from requiring states to use standardized tests to evaluate teachers.

Standardized tests in math, English language arts and science will still be required in certain grades and states will still be required to track data for racial, ethnic and other student subgroups. Action will be required where those subgroups are struggling and in the worst-performing schools.

ESSA will work well for California because it mandates some of the same ideas that the state has already implemented, according to an analysis by John Fensterwald at EdSource.org. Rather than requiring schools to be evaluated based only on standardized test scores, ESSA calls for multiple measures of progress. California’s new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) already requires districts to provide reports on multiple metrics, including

CAPTA Legislation Conference

The California State PTA Legislation Conference will be held on March 14 and 15 in Sacramento. Registration is \$210 for adults and \$105 for students. Hotel reservations must be made separately.

For more information, go to www.capta.org.

student suspension, attendance, and dropout and expulsion rates. LCFF also requires county offices of education to intervene when student subgroups lag behind.

For the first time since the ESEA was originally passed in 1965, the revised act recognizes the importance of early childhood education. It makes permanent the Pre-school Development Grant program and has several provisions that encourage states to develop quality early education programs.

ESSA also provides a separate funding stream and a small increase in funding for after-school programs such as tutoring, field trips and enrichment activities for children from low income families.

Other provisions of the new law include:

- Greater transparency — more detailed information will be available to parents and the public on test scores and per-pupil funding.
- State control of state standards.
- Assistance to help states improve low-performing schools.
- Funding for at-risk children.
- Assistance to help states increase teacher quality.

ESSA goes into effect in the 2017-18 school year. This means there will be a one-and-a-half year transition period as states move away from NCLB requirements and adopt programs in alignment with the new law.

Last chance to register!

Sacramento Safari
February 22-23

★Registration closes January 29★

Register at
www.fourthdistrictpta.org

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

Bills dealing with teacher issues may be taken up again

Issues surrounding teacher evaluation, tenure and layoffs continue to be hot topics in Sacramento. Several bills dealing with these issues stalled during the last legislative session but may be taken up again as lawmakers return to work in January.

Two largely identical bills dealing with teacher evaluations have been introduced in the Assembly and the Senate: AB 575 by Assemblyman Patrick O'Donnell and SB 499 by Senator Carol Liu. Both bills would require school districts and county offices of education to implement teacher assessment systems that include evidence of student progress, multiple classroom observations by trained evaluators, and peer review and assistance for underperforming teachers. The State Department of Education would be directed to develop best practices for teacher evaluations. California State PTA has a position of "support if amended" on both of these measures.

CAPTA has a "watch" position on the following bills:

- AB 1078, by Assemblywoman Kristin Olsen, also

deals with teacher evaluations. It would require the State Board of Education to revise and update the guidelines that school districts may use in the development of teacher evaluation procedures. The State Department of Education would have enforcement authority if school districts fail to comply with evaluation laws.

- AB 1044, by Assemblywoman Catharine Baker, would eliminate "last-in, first-out" practices in school district layoffs. Districts would be allowed to consider teaching performance, school needs and student needs—not just seniority—when school staff reductions are necessary.
- AB 1248, by Assemblyman Rocky Chavez, would extend a teacher's probationary period from two years to three years. A teacher would have to receive three consecutive positive reviews before receiving permanent status or tenure.

Federal spending bill increases funding for education by \$1.2 billion

In December, Congress passed and President Barack Obama signed a spending bill that funds federal programs and services for Fiscal Year 2016. The bill increases funding for education by \$1.2 billion and includes key investments in early learning, special education, school safety and other programs aimed at creating opportunities for every child.

"National PTA applauds the leadership and bipartisan work of Congress to make investments that will help every child reach his or her full potential and improve our nation's economic competitiveness," said National PTA President Laura Bay.

National PTA commends Congress for prioritizing federal investment in the following programs:

- Title I, which provides assistance to schools with high percentages of children from low-income families and includes some funds for family engagement efforts.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which provides grants to states to support students with special needs.
- Head Start, which provides comprehensive early childhood education and health services to low-income families.

National PTA is also pleased that the bill increases funding for arts in education programs, as well as the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program that supports state and local efforts to ensure all children have a safe and healthy environment in which to thrive

and learn.

However, National PTA is disappointed the Statewide Family Engagement Centers program was not funded in the bill. This program is included in the Every Student Succeeds Act—the new law governing the federal role in K-12 education. It would provide states and districts with the capacity to support effective implementation and enhancement of family engagement policies and initiatives.

You're invited!

Fourth District PTA
Advocacy Forum



Inside Orange County's School Districts

Join us for a revealing panel discussion as Orange County school district superintendents describe how they 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.