

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

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Governor's May budget revise includes more money for schools

There is more money for education in Governor Brown's May revise budget, but the Governor continues to predict a recession in the near future.

Due to the complex requirements of Prop. 98, which guarantees minimum funding levels for education, the revised budget allocates \$2.8 billion more than the current year to K-12 schools and community colleges. Per student funding would go up to \$10,657, an increase of \$440 per pupil, according to the Legislative Analyst's Office.

Most of the new funding would go into the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). This would mean that LCFF would be 96 percent fully funded, which the Brown administration defines as restoring all districts to the inflation-adjusted amounts they got before the 2009 recession. While this sounds like good news, schools were already severely underfunded in 2009.

Of greatest concern to children's advocates is the lack of additional funding for early childhood education in the revised budget. The Governor's original proposal for \$1.7 billion for this purpose remains essentially the same in the May revise. The State Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten programs would continue to operate as usual in 2016-17, but the following year funding for the two programs would be combined into one block grant prioritized for low-income and at-risk four-year-olds. The money would go directly to school districts, which would have flexibility in how they spend the money. This has led supporters of early childhood education to worry that districts will opt to eliminate transitional kindergarten programs, which the state created in 2010.

Other allocations in the Governor's proposed budget revision include:

- \$100 million for a revolving loan program to fund school facility emergency repairs.
- An additional \$5.5 million for county departments of education.
- \$2.6 million for programs to reduce high school truancy and dropouts, from the savings resulting from Prop. 47, which reduced penalties for certain crimes.
- \$2 million for a college information website that provides planning and financial aid information to school counselors, students and parents.
- \$339 million for school energy-efficiency projects from Prop. 39, the California Clean Energy Jobs Act of 2012.
- \$2.5 million in one-time funding for teacher recruitment efforts.

- \$10 million in one-time funding to expand or create new four-year undergraduate teacher credentialing programs.

Governor Brown continues to urge fiscal restraint. "Things don't last forever and the surging tide of revenue is beginning to turn, as it always does," he said in presenting his May revise.

After this coming year, school funding may flatten or decline, depending on circumstances. A recession would reduce state revenues, meaning less money for education. In addition, the temporary sales tax increase approved through Prop. 30 will expire at the end of this year. The temporary increase in the personal income tax rates on high-income taxpayers will end in 2018, unless a proposal to extend that tax is approved by voters in November.

During the next few weeks state lawmakers will develop their own budget proposals and there may be continuing discussions between legislators and the Governor. The state Constitution requires the legislators to complete the budget by June 15 and the Governor must sign it by June 30.

Resolution on dyslexia is approved at California State PTA Convention

A resolution on dyslexia was approved by delegates at the California State PTA Convention in May.

The resolution calls for PTA at all levels to recognize the educational impacts of dyslexia, support teacher and staff training in recognizing and addressing the symptoms, and promote early intervention programs that help students be successful.

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin and that leads to difficulty in learning to read. Up to 20 percent of the general population, or over one million students in California K-12 public schools, display signs or symptoms of dyslexia. Students who struggle with reading often are at risk for academic failure as well as social and emotional problems.

There is compelling scientific evidence that early identification and intervention improves literacy outcomes for most students with symptoms of dyslexia. Yet most teacher preparation programs provide no training in this area. PTA will urge statewide action on this issue.



Start planning school board candidate forums now

Many school districts will hold school board elections during the General Election in November.

PTA is non-partisan and never supports or opposes candidates for public office. However, PTA should be actively involved in helping voters make informed decisions on school board candidates. Many PTAs do this by hosting candidate forums.

Election information and vote-by-mail ballots will be mailed soon after the school year starts, so if your PTA

intends to sponsor a candidate forum in the fall, the time to start planning is now.

Here are some things you can do to get ready:

- Form a committee to organize the forum.
- Decide how many forums to hold. Larger school districts may want to organize several forums in different locations.
- Review the information on candidate forums in the *California State PTA Toolkit* at www.capta.org or go to www.fourthdistrictpta.org/pta-and-elections.
- Identify and reserve one or more locations and dates for the forums.
- Develop a plan to publicize the events.
- Set up a timeline and assign tasks.
- Estimate costs and include them in your PTA's budget for next year.

Planning ahead will allow you to quickly and efficiently set up your candidate forums in the fall.

Include advocacy in your PTA budget

Be sure to include advocacy in your PTA budget for the next year.

Sacramento Safari will be held February 27 and 28, 2017. Budget about \$650 per person.

Other allocations might include:

- Voter registration drive supplies.
- Candidate forum expenses.
- Advocacy Resource Notebooks for new advocates (\$15 each).
- California State PTA Legislation Conference.
- California State PTA Convention, for training and events.

CAPTA supports tax extension

California State PTA has taken a support position on the Tax Extension to Fund Education and Healthcare Initiative, a constitutional amendment proposed for the California ballot on November 8.

The measure would extend for 12 years the temporary personal income tax increases approved in 2012 on incomes over \$250,000. About 89 percent of the funding would go to K-12 schools and 11 percent to state community colleges. Up to \$2 billion would be allocated to healthcare programs in certain years. School districts would decide how to spend the funding but would not be allowed to use it for administrative costs.

If passed, the tax extension is expected to raise between \$5 billion and \$11 billion per year.

The income tax increase, approved in 2012 under Prop. 30, is due to be phased out starting in 2018. A sales tax increase that was also approved under Prop. 30 is set to expire at the end of 2016 but would not be extended under the new proposition.

Prop. 30 raised about \$6 billion per year since it was approved in 2012. Elimination of these taxes would likely result in flat revenues for schools, and cuts in the event of a recession.

Signatures are being gathered to qualify the proposition for the November ballot.

Family engagement effort stalls

California State PTA's effort to promote family engagement has stalled in the state legislature.

AB 2680, sponsored by CAPTA, would have allocated one-time state funding to help school districts develop family engagement strategies and provide training to show parents how to be actively involved in their children's education.

CAPTA's statement on the bill:

"Despite our best efforts, AB 2680 did not make it off the Assembly Appropriation Committee's suspense file and will not be going further in the legislative process this year.

"But our efforts still matter: Through discussions with the Governor's Office and state policymakers as well as through our sponsorship of Assembly Bill 2680, PTA members and volunteers have raised the statewide visibility of the importance of meaningful, authentic family engagement in our children's educations -- and futures.

"While we were not able to secure family-engagement state funding through the legislative process this year, our efforts on behalf of families, schools and communities continue -- stay tuned as we keep up the call for meaningful family engagement, and thank you for being an advocate for your child and all California children!"



Count me in.