

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

MARCH 2017

PTA responds to the appointment of DeVos as Secretary of Education

National PTA President Laura Bay issued the following statement:

Betsy DeVos was confirmed as U.S. Secretary of Education. Throughout the confirmation process, National PTA joined other education, civil rights, disabilities and community organizations in expressing strong concerns for Secretary DeVos' lack of experience with public education; unfamiliarity with the challenges and opportunities facing the nation's public school students, families and educators; and support of programs that divert critical public school resources.

National PTA looks forward to informing Secretary DeVos on all of our public policy priorities, including equitable public education for all, healthy and safe schools, protections for our nation's most vulnerable youth and the importance of family engagement in education. Where we are in alignment, we stand ready to work together, however, policies of the administration that attempt to weaken public education will continue to meet National PTA's opposition.

National PTA has long stood and advocated for high-quality public education to ensure all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Our association remains steadfast in our belief that public education must be strengthened with the support of adequate funding and continue to be governed by public officials. We oppose any private school choice system—vouchers, tax credits or deductions—that would divert public school resources.

In addition to investing in public education, National

PTA urges Secretary DeVos to improve the Department of Education's role in advancing family engagement as a tool to increase student achievement and transform schools and communities. We strongly encourage the administration to carefully consider how family engagement can be integrated into all appropriate policy initiatives that it advances or supports. In particular, we urge the administration to fund the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECs) program and for the Department to utilize the appropriate resources to assist in the dissemination of research and best practices to support family engagement in local communities.

Furthermore, National PTA hopes that Secretary DeVos will ensure continued implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). We also hope she will continue to prioritize stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the law. It is essential that parents and other stakeholders have a seat at the table as states and districts develop new education plans to provide valuable input and hold them accountable.

National PTA is committed to working collaboratively with Secretary DeVos and the Department of Education to implement these recommendations and advance policies that ensure all children reach their highest potential. Critical progress has been made to improve education, provide educational equity for all children and make sure every child is prepared for long-term success. We cannot go backward.

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Forum

Tuesday, March 21
9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Orange City Hall
City Council Chambers
300 E. Chapman Avenue, Orange

Join us for an inside look at current education issues and how our Orange County school districts are dealing with them.

Guest Superintendents:

Mike Christensen
Dr. Joanne Culverhouse
Dr. Gregory A. Franklin
Gregg Haulk
Dr. Frederick Navarro

Orange Unified School District
La Habra City School District
Tustin Unified School District
Huntington Beach City School District
Newport-Mesa Unified School District



Topics for discussion will include:

- Teacher evaluations
- Budget challenges
- Parent involvement in the LCAP process
- Impact of federal education decisions
- Your questions!

School accountability Dashboard set to debut in March

The California School Dashboard is due to make its big arrival on line this month.

The Dashboard, the state's new school accountability system, uses multiple measures of school success such as graduation rates, chronic absenteeism and college and career readiness in addition to academic achievement. It replaces the single-score Academic Performance Index (API), which was based solely on standardized English and math tests.

The performance level for each of the measures combines information about status and change. In other words, it will answer the questions "How is our school doing now?" and "Has the performance in this area improved or declined?"

Prop 51 school bond money will be disbursed without lengthy delay

California voters approved a statewide school facilities bond last fall, but Gov. Jerry Brown said that he would hold up distribution of the funding until better auditing requirements are adopted.

Experts had predicted that it would take up to 18 months to develop the new regulations. However, the California Department of Finance recently announced that the new procedures will be in place soon, allowing funds to be disbursed by fall.

New grant agreements for school districts will be created by summer and tighter auditing procedures will be included in a trailer bill to the state budget, which must be completed by June, representatives from the finance department said.

This will open the way for the state to begin issuing funds from Prop. 51, the \$9 billion school facilities bond passed by voters in November. K-12 schools are slated to receive \$6 billion, with the remainder going to community colleges, charter schools, and career and technical education facilities.

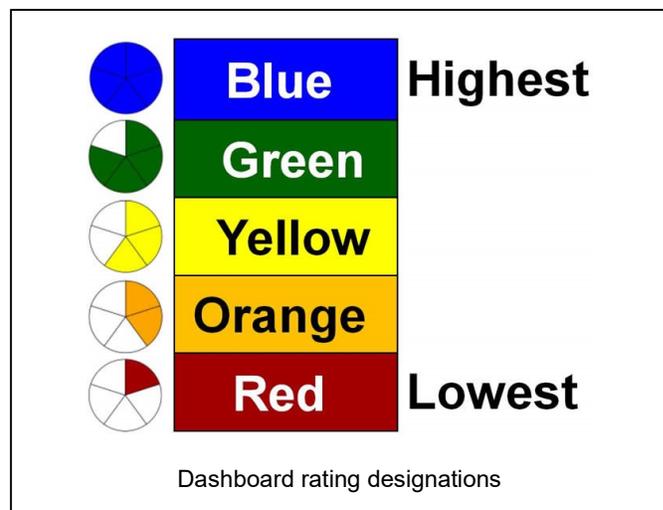
Gov. Brown opposed Prop. 51 because, he said, the current school facilities funding system lacks oversight, discourages innovation in school construction, and favors large and wealthy school districts.

The 2017-18 state budget proposed by Gov. Brown would include \$594 million in school facilities bonds. Of that, \$370 million would go to construction projects that were approved before the passage of Prop. 51.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson announced that the California Department of Education will provide application assistance to smaller school districts, including some that have never gotten state bond funding.

The combined performance levels will be rated using five colors, from red (lowest) to blue (highest) and by pie charts, with one pie piece for the lowest designation and five pieces for the highest. (This will allow the charts to be read if they are printed in black and white.)

All of the information will be posted on a new website: www.caschooldashboard.org, which is scheduled to go live in March. To get a detailed preview of how the Dashboard will work, go to www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/



Be a PTA arts advocate!

By Donna Artukovic, CAPTA Legislative Advocate

Be a hero for arts education! We need your voice – to advocate for the arts.

Why?

Research has shown that arts education:

- Increases learning in all subject areas.
- Reduces truancy and behavior problems.
- Increases graduation rates.
- Raises students' GPA.
- Develops parts of the brain other content areas do not stimulate.

What can you do?

- Determine if your school district has an arts plan.
- Talk to parents at your school about the importance of arts education.
- Ask your school board members if the arts are a priority.
- Talk to the district level administrator who is in charge of arts education.

Arts education is not the icing on the cake. It is the eggs that hold the cake together.