

Talking Points for Legislative Chairs, February 2017

Details are in the February issue of the *Advocacy Communicator*.

- Governor Brown has proposed a very cautious state budget that would increase education funding by only 2.1 percent. Schools still won't be back to 2007-08 funding levels, adjusted for inflation. The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office is predicting higher tax revenues than the governor, which would mean more money for schools.
- A lot of the money that the schools get from the state will not be spent on education programs. This is because Governor Brown and the legislature came up with a program to fund the teachers' retirement system, which had a \$74 billion unfunded liability. Each year school districts have to pay a larger percentage of their payrolls into the retirement system.
- The *Communicator* has a response to the Governor's budget from California State PTA President Justine Fischer, who says that the state still has inadequate funding for education. She also asks for funding to support family engagement in schools.
- The voters passed Prop. 51, the \$9 billion school bond, in the November election but Governor Brown says he won't release the funds until the legislature establishes better auditing procedures to document how the money is spent. Experts say it will take a year to 18 months to pass new laws and regulations on the dispersal of bond funds.
- Prop. 98, which was passed 25 years ago, was supposed to ensure that public schools got 40 percent of every state budget. According to a new report by the Legislative Analyst's Office, it hasn't worked out that way. In 24 of those years the state legislature has found ways to shift the funding guarantee up or down. The LAO says there is no evidence that school funding has increased under Prop. 98.
- California State PTA is presenting a webinar on the state's new Dashboard school accountability system, which replaces the old API number. This is a completely new system, so it would be a good idea to learn how it works. The webinar will be on Wednesday, February 8, at 1 p.m. You can register at capta.org.
- There is an Advocacy Forum in the works for March with a panel of Orange County school district superintendents talking about how things are working in their districts. Fourth District PTA has presented these superintendent panels in the past and they are always very interesting and informative! I'll have more information soon.

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