

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

APRIL 2020

California State PTA takes positions on bills

Schools are closed and the State Legislature is in recess, but the work of the PTA goes on. The California State PTA Legislative Action Committee held a teleconference in March and voted to support the following bills:

- **SB 1153 (Rubio)** makes Kindergarten attendance, which is now optional, mandatory.
- **SB 1174 (Portantino)** requires all students in Kindergarten through second grade to be screened for dyslexia.
- **AJR 30 (Choi):** This Assembly Joint Resolution measure urges the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to discourage the use of electronic cigarettes by youth and adults. (CAPTA also supports **SB 793 (Hill)** which bans the sale of flavored tobacco products.)
- **SB 956 (Jackson)** creates a five-member Tax Expenditure Review Board and asks the University of California to conduct a comprehensive assessment of how state taxes are spent. The UC report would be presented to the board and posted on the Internet.
- **AB 2581 (Reyes)** creates a state Department of Early Child Development to consolidate programs that provide early childhood services.

Relief package will help schools

The \$2.2 trillion coronavirus relief package approved by Congress and signed by President Trump on March 27 will provide several billion dollars for California schools and colleges, according to an article by John Fensterwald at EdSource.org.

The package includes money to support colleges and universities, funding for school districts based primarily on the numbers of low-income children they serve, and funding for child care and Head Start preschool programs. Money is also designated for food programs and meals for students when school is not in session.

“Advocates for K-12 and higher ed had hoped for substantially more funding in the Senate bill,” Fensterwald wrote.

There are concerns that costs for health care combined with a retracting state economy will quickly wipe out California’s \$21 billion rainy day fund and the \$1 billion education reserve fund, leading once again to severe cuts in funding for schools.

Congress is expected to consider additional funding bills to support the economy and schools.

- **SB 1204 (Jones)** would require school districts to collaborate with organizations that provide counseling, meals, housing and other programs to help identify and serve homeless children and youth.
- **SB 1446 (Roth):** Under this bill, whenever a law enforcement or welfare department receives a report of child abuse or neglect, an investigator must make contact with the person who made the report and the child to determine if the child should be removed from the home during the investigation.
- **SB 1149 (Hueso)** allows school districts to use state funding to encourage attendance by homeless children, foster children, and pupils with exceptional needs.

The Legislative Action Committee also voted to oppose **SB 1394 (Morrell)** which would allow school districts to require parental consent (“opt-in”) for sexual health and HIV prevention education for students in grades lower than grade 7.

Become an educated advocate!

There you are, stuck at home with plenty of time on your hands. What’s a parent to do while the children are busily doing their school work or quietly playing together or perhaps watching something educational on television? (That is what the kids are doing, right?)

Here’s an idea. Use the time to learn all the ins and outs of the California public education system. There’s an easy way to do that. Just go to Ed100.org. There you’ll find a free, self-paced online course that tells you just about everything you need to know about our schools.

The lessons are brief, readable, and even entertaining. The chief writers are Jeff Camp, a former Microsoft employee with a passion for education, and our own Carol Kocivar, attorney, journalist and former California State PTA president.

The website also offers blogs on timely topics. Recent entries include “Learning at Home, 2020” and “What Will Students Write About the Pandemic?”

BONUS! Register on the website before you start reading and earn a ticket for a drawing that could win \$1,000 for your school PTA!

Sign on to Ed100 and by the time the kids go back to school you will be a powerful, well-informed advocate!

State audit finds shortfall in Lottery funding for schools

The California State Lottery has shortchanged public schools by millions of dollars over several years, according to a recent state audit.

Since 2010, the Lottery's total operating revenue has increased by 115 percent, but its contribution to education has increased by only 66 percent, the audit found. The Lottery owes schools \$36 million for the 2017-18 year alone.

The 1984 proposition that created the Lottery stated that at least 34 percent of every dollar would go to public schools. In 2010 the legislature allowed bigger prize pay-

outs in hopes that this would increase lottery sales, resulting in more money for schools. The allocation for schools has remained flat in subsequent years.

SB 891 (Chang) would require that increases in school funding from the Lottery be directly proportional to the Lottery's increases in net revenue. It would also require the Lottery to pay \$36 million to schools to cover a shortfall in payments for the 2017-18 year and would mandate an annual audit of the program. California State PTA supports this bill.

Senator Ling Ling Chang, who introduced the bill, says the Lottery owes schools for at least four years. The Lottery director disputes the findings of the audit.

Did the Lottery save our schools?

Didn't the Lottery take care of school funding in California? This is a question we are often asked when we talk about the need for more money for our schools.

The answer is NO! Proceeds from the Lottery provide about 1 percent of the state's education budget.

The proposition that created the Lottery was written by Kimball Petition Management, a California company that collects signatures for initiative petitions. The money to pay for the signature gathering and the election campaign was provided by Scientific Games, a Georgia company that produces lottery materials. Funding for schools was added to make the initiative more appealing to voters.

Complete your 2020 Census!

By now you should have received your 2020 Census notification in the mail. Be sure to go online and submit your information. It's quick and easy!

An accurate and complete count is vitally important to ensure that California gets its share of federal funding for education. Census data also will be used to determine how many seats California has in the U.S. House of Representatives and to draw state and federal legislative district lines.

Federal law ensures that your private information is never published and that your answers cannot be used against you by any government agency or court.

**The Advocacy Forum
scheduled for Friday, April 3,
has been cancelled.**

**The California State PTA Convention
has been cancelled.**

OC superintendents work together

Who is making decisions about local school closures?

During this challenging time, the superintendents from all of our school districts are keeping in constant contact with one another and with Dr. Al Mijares, Orange County Superintendent of Schools. All of these leaders meet on a regular basis by teleconference to keep up with the latest information about Covid-19 from the Governor, the President, Orange County Health Care Agencies and the national Centers for Disease Control.

The superintendents also discuss forward planning, share best practices and report on what kind of support they need from OCDE.

With regard to school closures, districts are not required to conform to the decisions made by other districts or by the county. However, there has been a tendency to be consistent in school closure decisions.

You can get the latest information from the Orange County Department of Education and sign up for email updates at <https://newsroom.ocde.us/>

CAPTA Advocacy Webinars

Join California State PTA Director of Legislation Shereen Walter and members of the Legislation Team during monthly Advocacy Webinars to discuss all the latest information.

The webinars take place the first Wednesday of the month from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Webinar registration link:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/1383569761862691852>

Webinar ID: 436-971-571

For more information go to capta.org/focus-areas/advocacy/