

# Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

JUNE 2020

## California's proposed education budget is grossly insufficient

*This article is adapted from a blog by Carol Kocivar at [www.ed100.org](http://www.ed100.org)*

A tsunami is about to wipe out California school budgets like sandcastles on a beach. The California Education Coalition, a combination of the state's major education organizations, including California State PTA, is sounding the alarm. The funds proposed in the education budget are grossly insufficient. Without more funding, vital school services will be swept away at the very moment they are needed most. The harms will be severe and lasting. Children will be hurt.

To reopen schools safely will require measures that cost money, including:

- **Uncrowded classes.** To keep students and staff healthy and safe, schools need changes to shrink class sizes and reduce crowding.
- **Clean spaces.** Schools need a new standard of cleaning and safety protocols with sufficient supplies.
- **Health services.** Counselors and nurses are needed to support student physical and mental health.
- **Nutrition.** As unemployment has spiked, more students than ever are reliant on school meals.

### How Bad is It?

To meet the challenges of this pandemic, schools need more resources. Instead, they will get less. Resources for education are being slashed.

Funding for K-12 schools and community colleges is largely determined by a formula that voters put into the state constitution decades ago by passing Proposition 98.

## There's bad news for schools – PTA parent advocacy is needed now

Despite efforts by Governor Newsom to minimize cuts to education and children's services, the revised May California budget proposal leaves schools and other programs facing significant cuts.

The largest cut to K-12 funding is a 10 percent reduction to the Local Control Funding Formula (\$6.5 billion in 2020-21).

Schools throughout the state, already bracing for cuts before the pandemic, now have to cut budgets even further. The financial hurt stretches beyond the coming school year, with even greater economic challenges in the following years.

The pandemic has overwhelmed the state's capacity to adequately support the education, health and welfare of California's children.

We need to speak up and advocate for more money:

In good times, when state tax receipts go up, Proposition 98 requires the budget for education to go up with it. In hard times, when state receipts fall, the minimum amount of funding guaranteed for education decreases.

These are hard times. State revenue this year is projected to drop sharply — so sharply that if schools were funded only at the minimum level guaranteed by Proposition 98 they would be cut by \$18 billion.

California's annual budget process calls for the Governor to propose revisions in May. To lessen the harm to children, this year's "May Revision" of the budget shifts some state spending to support education. The budget also includes some one-time federal stimulus money from the federal CARES act. (Only about one percent of the federal stimulus funding was directed to education — an amount reasonably viewed as budget dust.)

Lacking serious federal help, the proposed California budget still leaves schools and other programs underwater.

### Major Cut to Local Control Funding Formula

To help balance a precarious budget, K-12 education is facing a 10 percent reduction of funding for the Local Control Funding Formula (\$6.5 billion in 2020-21). This is the major source of money for schools. As in other states, California's constitution requires a balanced budget. The state cannot spend money it does not have. But it can make some adjustments by delaying payments of billions of dollars it owes to school districts. Late payments are part of the state's budget proposal.

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More money from the federal government, more money at the ballot box, and more revenue in the state budget.

- **Contact your state representatives:** Let them know what the impact of the proposed budget will be on your school. To find your representatives [click here](#).
- **Advocate for More Federal Funding:** Contact your federal representatives and ask them to support an additional [\\$200 billion](#) in federal funds for schools. Unless Congress acts, schools will experience major budget cuts triggered by the pandemic. [Click here](#) to send a message to your federal representatives.
- **Help pass the [Schools and Communities First](#) ballot initiative which is on the November ballot:** This could raise about \$11.5 billion dollars each year for our schools and local communities. [Click here to volunteer](#)

## California PTA will host a virtual Statewide Association Meeting

Like many events, this year's California State PTA Convention has been cancelled. Instead, CAPTA will hold a virtual Statewide Association Meeting on June 9, 10 and 11.

The meetings, to be held from 7 to 9 p.m. each day, will include celebrating newly chartered and legacy PTAs, the Reflections art program, messages from special guests, and scholarship, grant and membership award winners.

PTA members will vote on revisions to the Legislation Platform and on five resolutions.

The registration fee for the meeting is \$10 and you must be a PTA member to participate. For more information and to register go to [capta.org](http://capta.org).

### Platform and Resolutions

Why are the Legislation Platform and resolutions important?



California State PTA is a grassroots organization, so the members decide what issues to support. They do this at convention by voting on the Legislation Platform (every other year) and on resolutions about specific issues. The State PTA uses these as authority, along with the mission and purposes of PTA and position statements, when it takes a position for or against a

bill or ballot proposition and when it calls members to action.

In many cases resolutions approved at the state level are forwarded to the National PTA, where delegates to the National PTA Convention may also adopt them.

This year convention participants will consider the following resolutions:

- Resolution A: E-Cigarettes/Vaping, Flavored Tobacco Products and Youth Health
- Resolution B: Net Zero Emission Schools
- Resolution C: Mental Health Services for Our Children and Youth
- Resolution D: Promote Evidence-Based Policies and Practices to Improve Equitable Outcomes for Marginalized Children and Youth
- Resolution E: Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Funding

Go to [capta.org](http://capta.org) to read the proposed revisions to the Platform and complete information on the resolutions.

## Education budget

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This is not a cost-free solution, of course. To make ends meet, school districts turn to whatever local budget reserves they have. Many will borrow to pay the bills, incurring additional costs. In the Great Recession, many schools simply closed their doors when the money started to run out.

### More State and Federal Support

The Coalition is asking the legislature and the Newsum administration for greater support for education — now. Coalition proposals include:

- Review tax credits and deductions to see if eliminating some of them could generate more money for schools.
- Protect local schools against revenue losses caused by low attendance. Currently, the amount of money schools get depends on how many kids show up. If schools close because of a resurgence of the pandemic or parents keep kids home from school for health or safety reasons, attendance drops and so does school funding.

Unfortunately, state money alone cannot suffice. Schools will still be short by billions.

The Learning Policy Institute estimates that a 15 percent reduction in state education funding could lead to the loss of more than 300,000 teaching positions nationwide. States just don't have that kind of money tucked away in reserves to stave off cuts.

The California State PTA is asking members to speak up. See page 1.

## 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 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. (except August 4). Here is the schedule of upcoming webinars:

- June 3, 2020
- July 1, 2020
- August 4, 2020 (Tuesday)

**Webinar registration link:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/2338789182473643275>

If your computer does not have speakers or you otherwise have trouble hearing the audio once you've logged in, mute your speakers and call 1 (631) 992-3221 to hear the discussion. Use attendee PIN number 300-067-555.

(Note: you cannot use this phone number to hear the webinar unless you register and log in through the above link first.)