

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

MAY 2015

U.S. Senate committee passes ESEA/NCLB bill in bipartisan vote

Congress continues to work on the long-awaited reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) says he wants to bring his version of the revised law to the Senate floor before the Memorial Day recess.

The ESEA was originally passed in 1965 and was usually revised about every five years. The current law, titled No Child Left Behind (NCLB), was due for reauthorization in 2007.

The new version is called the Every Child Achieves Act (ECAA). In April a draft of the law spent three days in the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. Representatives from National PTA attended the hearings and presented PTA's positions on several dozen proposed amendments. Most of these amendments were withdrawn, including one allowing "portability" of Title I funding for disadvantaged students, which would allow the students to take this funding to the school of their choice. PTA opposes this idea because it would un-

dermine Title I's fundamental purpose of assisting public schools with high concentrations of poverty and high-needs students. This amendment and others may be reintroduced on the Senate floor.

Several amendments supported by PTA were passed, including those dealing with school counseling programs, education technology, early childhood education and physical education. The committee unanimously approved the bill in a bipartisan vote.

According to the Senate Committee, the ECAA allows states to develop accountability systems; maintains important information for parents, teachers, and communities; helps states improve low-performing schools; strengthens state and local control; and requires community-based needs assessments to better target funding. For a summary of the bill, go to: http://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/The_Every_Child_Achieves_Act_of_2015--summary.pdf

A similar bill has been introduced in the House by Congressman John Kline (R-MN), but progress has stalled on this measure.

ECAA must be passed by both houses of Congress and signed by the President before it goes into law.

LAO predicts higher tax revenues

California is collecting hundreds of millions of dollars more in tax revenues than was anticipated in the budget Governor Jerry Brown proposed in January. This will mean additional money for public schools, but it could also create problems for other areas of the budget.

The governor will have to address this situation when he issues his revised budget proposal mid-May.

The complicated formulas of Prop. 98 require most of any new funding to be applied to K-12 schools and community colleges. In order to balance the rest of the budget, legislators may need to cut other programs, including social services for children and families.

The state Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) issued a report in April that describes five possible scenarios and solutions for the 2015-16 budget. The options presented in the report include changing Prop. 98 calculations by counting local property tax revenues toward the minimum funding guarantee or adjusting the way Prop. 2 (the "Rainy Day Fund") is implemented.

Although there may be tough choices ahead for the governor and state legislators, "these budget problems would be quite modest compared to the state's budget problems of just a few years ago," the LAO stated.

Get ready for a new year of PTA Advocacy!

- Advocating for children, families and public education is PTA's #1 job!
- Has your unit or council elected or appointed an advocacy chair?
- Fourth District PTA provides lots of support for unit and council advocates, including this newsletter, talking points, Advocacy Roundtables, the Advocacy Resource Notebook, a speakers bureau and more!

Sacramento Safari 2016!

Dates: February 22 and 23
Please include about \$650 in your unit or council budget for each person you plan to send to Sacramento.

CAPTA co-sponsors bills on homeless youth and young men of color

California State PTA is co-sponsoring two bills that have been introduced in the state legislature.

SB 636 (Liu) would establish the Homeless Youth Basic Materials Needs Assistance Program to provide school supplies, dental supplies, socks and shoes, and hygiene products to homeless children and youth in public schools, allowing them to attend school on a more equal footing with their peers. The program would combine state and federal funds with matching resources from existing non-profits.

CAPTA is co-sponsoring this bill with *K to College*, a non-profit that serves homeless and impoverished children and adults.

There were 297,617 homeless public school students in California during the 2013-14 school year. A recent survey indicated that over 70 percent of these children and youth did not have their basic material needs met.

CAPTA is also co-sponsoring AB 80 (Campos) which seeks to address the racial disparities and the systemic barriers that limit the success of California's young

men of color. This bill would set up a 21-member Inter-agency Taskforce on the Status of Boys and Men of Color to help state agencies and leaders establish a more coordinated response to the challenges facing our diverse population.

By 2050, California's male population will be nearly 80 percent boys and men of color, according to the office of Assembly Member Norma Campos. A disproportionate number of Latino, African American, Native American, and Southeast Asian males are trapped in a cycle of poverty, prison, and disadvantage. Addressing this issue is not merely a matter of fairness and equality – it is essential to improving the economic strength and competitiveness of the state, Campos states.

Other bills supported by CAPTA

California State PTA has taken positions on more than 60 bills and is supporting the following measures:

- **AB 141 (Bonilla) Teacher credentialing: beginning teacher induction programs.** A school district, county department of education, or charter school would be required to provide a state-approved induction program to beginning teachers, at no cost to the teachers. This would commence with new hires for the 2016-17 school year.
- **AB 216 (Garcia) Vapor product sales to minors.** This bill would limit sales of e-cigarettes and vapor delivery products to individuals 18 years and older.
- **SB 242 (Monning) School security: surplus military equipment.** Approval of a school board would be required before a school district police department could receive surplus military equipment.
- **SB 148 (McGuire) Career technical education: Career and Job Skills Education Act.** Would authorize school districts, county offices of education, and regional occupation programs to collaborate in offering technical education programs and would set up a state fund to provide grants for such programs.
- **AB 713 (Weber) Elementary education: kindergarten.** Would require a child to complete one year of kindergarten before being admitted to the first grade, beginning with the 2017-18 school year.

For a complete list of bills that PTA supports, opposes, or is watching, go to www.capta.org under Focus Areas/ Advocacy/ Current Legislation.

California's ranking improves with Prop. 30 tax increases

California's nationwide ranking in per pupil spending has improved due to the temporary tax increases under Prop. 30, which was passed by voters in 2012.

California is spending about \$1,800 more per student in 2014-15 than in 2012-13, according to a report by the California Budget and Policy Center (CBPC). The gap in per student spending between California and the rest of the country narrowed from \$2,675 in 2012-13 to \$975 in 2014-15, the smallest gap since 2001-02.

This puts California in 29th place among all states and the District of Columbia, up from 42nd place in 2012-13, according to CBPC (which uses statistics from the National Education Association).

Prop. 30 increased the state sales tax rate through 2016 and the personal income tax rates on high-income taxpayers through 2018. This is expected to raise a projected \$7.9 billion in fiscal year 2014-15 and \$8 billion in 2015-16. After that the additional revenue will decline as the tax increases expire.

The California Teachers Association and the California School Boards Association support an initiative for the 2016 ballot to extend the tax or make it permanent. Governor Jerry Brown so far has indicated he is opposed to renewing it.