

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

FEBRUARY 2018

Gov. Brown presents his proposed budget for 2018-2019

As is often the case, there was both good news and bad in Governor Jerry Brown's proposed state budget, which he presented in January.

The good news is that the tentative budget includes lots of new money for education. The governor proposes to spend \$78.3 billion on Prop.98 funding for schools, an increase of \$4.6 billion over the current year. K-12 schools would get 89 percent of that, with the rest going to community colleges.

The governor has specific ideas for how to spend this extra cash. His budget would allocate:

- \$3 billion to finish funding the Local Control Funding Formula two years ahead of schedule.
- \$55 million to help county offices of education assist school districts that need help with low-performing student groups. In addition, \$4 million in competitive grants would go to eight county offices that would provide guidance to the other counties.
- \$6.5 million increase in funding for the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, a new state agency that oversees districts' academic achievement.
- \$100 million to recruit and train teachers in special education, where there is a shortage of teachers.
- \$224 million to further develop career technical education programs.
- \$300,000 to improve the usefulness of the California School Dashboard. Parents and teachers have complained it is hard to use and too complex.

In addition, Gov. Brown wants to give districts \$1.8 billion in discretionary one-time funding.

As always, Gov. Brown warned that the next recession could be just around the corner. To prepare, he would like to deposit \$3.5 billion in the state's reserve fund, in effect filling up the rainy day piggy bank with \$13.5 billion. It is hoped that this would prevent the kind

of drastic budget cuts the state was forced to make during previous recessions.

The new funding is great news for public education. However, full funding of the Local Control Funding Formula will only return schools to the level of per-pupil funding they received in 2007-08, adjusted for inflation. This is far from the level of funding our schools need.

In addition, a substantial portion of the funding will not be used for education programs because school districts are paying more into the state retirement systems for teachers and other school employees. The 101-year-old pension system has never been properly funded and does not have enough money to pay future obligations. In 2013, Gov. Brown and the state Legislature negotiated a program to eliminate the \$74 billion unfunded liability by requiring the state, school districts and individual teachers to pay increasing amounts into the system each year. This year, those payments will eat up about \$1.3 billion, or about 40 percent of the new funding schools will get.

Safari Orientation Meeting

Friday, February 2

9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Fountain Valley School District
10055 Slater Avenue, Fountain Valley

You will receive important information and your Safari Notebook. Be sure to attend or send a representative.

Questions?

Contact Suzanne Gauntlett at
Sac-safari@fourthdistrictpta.org

PTA Advocacy Conference Call

The next California State PTA advocacy conference call is scheduled for Monday, February 26, at 7 p.m.

Call-in Directions:

- Conference Dial-In Number: 1 (712) 775-7300
- Participant Access Code: 960878#
- To mute or unmute during the session, press *6.

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Forum

Friday, March 9

9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Fountain Valley School District
10055 Slater Ave., Fountain Valley

Guest Speaker:
Lynne Pedersen



Lynne Pedersen is the founder and CEO of **One Recovery** (www.1recovery.com), an arts-infused mental health program for young people currently being used by the Newport Mesa Unified School District.

CAPTA will work for better family involvement and more funding

Fourth District PTA is joining California State PTA (CAPTA) in working on two major goals this year: strengthening family engagement in schools and increasing school funding.

Family Engagement

CAPTA will sponsor legislation to create a stronger and more inclusive family engagement framework within the Local Control and Accountability Plan.

When parents effectively advocate for their children, student attendance improves and dropout rates decline. According to the Harvard Family Project (2009), “Schools would need to spend \$1,000 more per pupil to reap the same gains in student achievement that an involved and engaged parent brings.”

Six areas where CAPTA would like changes:

1. Welcoming all families into the school community
2. Ensuring effective two-way communication between schools and families
3. Supporting student success
4. Empowering families to advocate for equity and access for all students
5. Treating families as partners to inform, influence and create practices and programs to support student success

6. Collaborate with families and the broader community to expand learning opportunities, community services and promote civic participation

School Funding

CAPTA will urge state legislators to hold informational hearings on options for a long-term spending plan that will increase per pupil spending equivalent to the top 10 highest achieving and funded states.

- California has the fewest administrators and largest class sizes in the country. Our schools are sorely lacking in counselors, nurses, librarians and other support staff. (Kidsdata.org and California Department of Education)
- California student achievement continues to fall below most other states in both math (45 states) and English and reading levels (39 states). (National Assessment of Educational Progress, The Nation’s Report Card)
- States that invest more in education show higher student achievement levels than California. (Education Week, Quality Counts, 2017)
- The top 10 states in student achievement provide on average \$7,500 more per pupil funding than California. (California School Boards Association)

Parents should help create a positive school environment

A positive school environment directly impacts the success of a school, leading to better teacher retention, lower dropout rates, a decrease in incidences of violence, and increases in student achievement. Local PTAs should be actively involved in assuring that their schools support students, parents and staff.

That was the message California State PTA President Dianna MacDonald brought to the Fourth District PTA Advocacy Forum in January.

School climate is one of eight priority areas that a school district must address in its Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), along with family involvement and student engagement. Local PTAs should make sure that their school districts are addressing these areas in a meaningful way, MacDonald said.

A California Department of Education task force, which included PTA participation, recommended that each school district create a clear definition of school climate for their community and then survey students, parents and staff for their input regarding safety, relationships and connectedness, conditions for teaching and learning, and empowerment and engagement for parents, families, students and staff.

The results of the survey should be included in the district’s LCAP and Dashboard. Parents and other stake-

holders should ask, “Where are we missing the mark and what are we going to do about it?”

MacDonald urged PTA leaders to become familiar with their local LCAP process and serve on the school district LCAP committee.

“Everything has changed in the last few years – standards, curriculum, accountability, funding,” she said. “You have to be aware of what is going on and make sure that the cracks in the plan get attention.”

“Be at the table or you’re going to be on the menu!” she said.

What is the Dashboard?

The California State Dashboard is the state’s new accountability system for school districts and individual schools. Unlike the previous Academic Performance Index (API), which was a single score based solely on tests, the Dashboard reflects multiple measures of success. It also indicates whether there has been improvement or decline in each measure.

The Dashboard is at www.caschooldashboard.org

The website includes information to help you understand the new system. You can also access a brief tutorial on the Dashboard at www.capta.org.