

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

APRIL 2018

Should middle and high school classes begin later in the morning?

Would our teenagers be better off if their school day started a little later in the morning?

Yes, says State Senator Anthony Portantino (25th District). His bill, SB 328, would require the school day for middle and high schools to begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. The bill is supported by California State PTA.

Portantino has amassed 200 pages of information to back up his belief that later start times will result in numerous positive results. (The report is available at his website, www.sd25.senate.ca.gov/2017-legislation.)

Sleep patterns change with puberty so teenagers have trouble falling asleep before 11 p.m. The American Psychological Association found that school districts with later start times saw increases in attendance rates, grade point averages, state assessment scores, college admission test scores, and student and family interaction. There were

decreases in student-involved car accidents, disciplinary actions and students sleeping during class. Studies by the American Academy of Pediatrics show that teens who get enough sleep are less likely to be overweight or suffer from depression.

A number of school districts have switched to later start times and have also found that smoking, sexual promiscuity, criminal activity and suicide have gone down, Portantino says.

The bill is opposed by the California School Boards Association and Senator Patrick O'Donnell (chair of the Senate Education Committee), who argue that this decision should be left to local school districts.

Portantino responds that this is a public health issue. "We are killing our teenagers by sleep-depriving them," he said during a presentation at Sacramento Safari.

What will the state do with \$3 billion in extra tax revenues?

So far this year California has collected almost \$3 billion more in tax revenues than expected. Governor Brown, ever the fiscal conservative, wants to use \$1.8 billion of that to give school districts one-time grants to spend as they wish. State legislators, on the other hand, hope to increase school funding on an ongoing basis.

A group of state senators wants to take \$1 billion from the governor's proposal and add it to the base funding in the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) on an ongoing basis. They would allocate an additional \$200 million as supplemental money for high-needs students.

LCFF, which covers more than 80 percent of state K-12 funding, gives every school district a base grant for each student, with differing amounts for various grade levels. Districts receive additional funding to address the needs of students who are English learners, low-income, or in foster care. School districts with large numbers of high-needs students have seen substantial increases in funding, but districts in more affluent areas have complained that the base amounts are inadequate. This is especially true because of the higher contributions that all school districts are required to make into the state retirement system for school employees.

In the Assembly, Al Muratsuchi (66th District) introduced AB 2808, which would increase the LCFF base amounts. This would also increase the funding for high-needs students, which is calculated on the amount of the base grant. California State PTA supports this bill.

The next step in the budget process will be the Gover-

nor's "May revise", an updated proposal based on the actual revenues received by the state. The legislature must approve a budget by June 15.

Teenagers can pre-register to vote

In California, teenagers who are 16 or 17 years old can pre-register to vote. They will be eligible to vote when they reach their 18th birthday. For more information or to register online, go to the California Secretary of State website, www.sos.ca.gov, or the Orange County Registrar of Voters, www.ocvote.com.

Ron Bennett



PTA lost a beloved friend with the death of Ron Bennett on March 17. As CEO of School Services of California, Ron assisted school districts with collective bargaining, leadership development, school facilities, strategic planning and other issues. In spite of his busy schedule, Ron always took time to speak at PTA advocacy events, most recently at Sacramento Safari in February. His presentations were laced with humor and packed with important information. He will be remembered with gratitude and affection.

Bills supported by California State PTA

After extensive study, California State PTA has taken support positions on a number of bills under consideration by the state legislature. These include the following:

AB 1743 (O'Donnell): This bill would increase funding for the state's Career Technical Education (CTE) Incentive Grant Program to \$500 million per year. It would also provide \$12 million for county offices of education to establish CTE coordinators who would assist school districts.

AB 1861 (Rodriguez): Sex education classes in schools currently include information about human trafficking. This bill would require classes to tell students how social media and mobile phones are used in human trafficking. Technological and social media advances have given traffickers the ability to lure and exploit a greater number of children and teenagers.

AB 1868 (Cunningham): This bill would authorize a school district to provide optional instruction in sex education classes regarding the potential risks and consequences of creating and sharing sexually suggestive or sexually explicit materials through cellular telephones, social networking Internet web sites, computer networks, or other digital media.

AB 2683 (Gipson): This bill would provide \$1 mil-

lion to create the California Student Author Art and Literacy Project for pupils from extremely low income communities. Nonprofit organizations would apply for grants to establish book publishing programs for pupils in grades 6 to 12 in designated low-income neighborhoods. Grant recipients would present weekly pupil author workshops, giving young people an opportunity to write, edit, and promote a short story.

AB 1754 (McCarty): Currently, about 40,000 low-income children do not have access to preschool. This bill would require the state to provide early education programs to all low-income four-year-old children.

AB 2735 (O'Donnell): In many school districts students are taking English language classes instead of the courses required for graduation and college admission. This bill requires middle and high schools to allow English learners to enroll in core academic subject courses, including English language arts, mathematics and science.

SB 837 (Dodd): When the state raised the age for children to enter kindergarten, it also allowed school districts to establish pre-kindergarten programs for children who turned five between September 2 and December 2. This bill would require all 4-year-old children to be admitted to existing pre-kindergarten programs.

Five candidates run for state superintendent of public instruction

California voters will select a new state superintendent of public instruction this year. Five candidates are running for the non-partisan position.

The state superintendent heads the California Department of Education, which administers and enforces state and federal education laws, provides technical assistance to school districts, and collects, analyzes and disseminates data about the state's school system. The superintendent has limited authority to set policy, but often serves as an advocate for policy changes.

The current state superintendent, Tom Torlakson, has served two four-year terms and will be termed out.

The five candidates hoping to replace him are:

PTA does not support or oppose candidates for public office.

PTA does encourage voter registration and informed voting.

- **Adam Anderson**, former chief of staff of Education Superhighway, a nonprofit that works with states and school districts to upgrade their high-speed Internet capacity.

- **Karen Blake**, a petroleum geologist and co-founder of STEMdeliverd.com, a website promoting science and nature games, videos and activities.

- **Lily Ploski**, an instructor for an Upward Bound program in Oakland.

- **Tony Thurmond**, a social worker and currently a state Assembly member from Richmond.

- **Marshall Tuck**, a former charter school executive and CEO of the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, a nonprofit operating 16 Los Angeles Unified schools.

PTA Advocacy Conference Call

The next California State PTA advocacy conference call is scheduled for Monday, April 23, 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.

If none of the candidates receive a majority of votes in the June primary the top two will be in a runoff in the November General Election.

Three of the candidates—Thurmond, Tuck and Ploski—recently participated in a candidate forum in Los Angeles. A written report and audio recording of the forum is posted at EdSource.org.