

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

JUNE 2018

May revise budget proposal has a small increase in school funding

As anticipated, California's tax revenues are \$8 billion higher than Governor Brown projected in his initial budget proposal for the state in January. However, only a relatively small increase will go to schools under the Governor's May revise budget.

The Governor's new budget proposal allocates only an additional \$68 million to Prop. 98 funding for kindergarten through community college. K-12 schools get about 89 percent of that funding.

Altogether the Governor would like to increase the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) by about \$3 billion over last year. This would "fully fund" LCFF, which means schools will return to the level of per-pupil funding they received in 2007-08, adjusted for inflation.

In addition, the Governor's proposal includes \$1.8

billion in one-time funding that school districts could spend as they choose. State Senate leaders would prefer to designate that amount as an ongoing funding increase.

Several PTA priority areas would receive funding:

- \$13.3 million for a "community engagement initiative" to help school districts involve parents and the community in developing their Local Control and Accountability Plans.
- \$108 million in new money for early childhood education. California PTA contends this amount is not adequate to meet the need.
- \$15 million for a new school climate pilot program. The funding would go to the Orange County and the Butte County offices of education to design and test programs that address social and emotional learning, bullying prevention and students' emotional trauma.
- \$2 million in ongoing funding for career technical education.

The proposal also includes funding to increase special education staff and support children's mental health programs. A fiscal transparency plan would allow parents to see how supplemental grants for students are spent.

As the budget is developed, CAPTA will continue to advocate for adequate funding for our schools, safe and welcoming school environments for all students, families and communities, high-quality education, and authentic and measurable family engagement in education policy.

Plan ahead for school board forums

Many school districts will hold school board elections during the General Election in November.

PTA is non-partisan and never supports or opposes candidates for public office. However, PTA should be actively involved in helping voters make informed decisions on school board candidates. Many PTAs do this by hosting candidate forums.

Election information and vote-by-mail ballots will be mailed soon after the school year starts, so if your PTA intends to sponsor a candidate forum in the fall, the time to start planning is now.

Here are some things you can do to get ready:

- Form a committee to organize the forum.
- Decide how many forums to hold. Larger school districts may want to organize several forums in different locations.
- Review the information on candidate forums in the *California State PTA Toolkit* at www.capta.org or go to www.fourthdistrictpta.org/pta-and-elections.
- Identify and reserve one or more locations and dates for the forums.
- Develop a plan to publicize the events.
- Set up a timeline and assign tasks.
- Estimate costs and include them in your PTA's budget for next year.

Planning ahead will allow you to quickly and efficiently set up your candidate forums in the fall.

Family engagement bill advances

AB 2878, which would define family engagement in the State Education Code, has been approved by the California State Assembly. It was referred to the State Senate and will be considered by the Senate Education Committee in June. Assemblyman Kevin McCarty (Sacramento) has signed on as a co-author.

AB 2878 is sponsored by California State PTA (CAPTA) and was introduced by Assembly Member Rocky Chávez, from San Diego. Seeing this bill passed into law is a top priority for CAPTA this year.

Parental involvement is one of eight state priorities that a school district must address in the development of its Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). However, the term is not clearly defined and is interpreted differently throughout the state. AB 2878 would create a more specific description of family engagement to guide school districts in developing their LCAPs.

Resolution on school funding approved at CAPTA State Convention

A resolution urging the Legislature and Governor “to improve and reform state and local funding so all California students have the opportunity to reach academic proficiency levels” was approved by the delegates at this year’s California State PTA Convention.

Because many children begin kindergarten with deeply entrenched school-readiness gaps due to their socio-economic circumstances, the resolution also calls for increased funding in early childhood education.

The background summary of the resolution notes that “California remains well below the national average in terms of per-pupil spending, resulting in an education system where our children are consistently and troublingly below the national average in terms of both basic understanding and proficiency when compared to their peers across the nation. The achievement gap is even wider when we review the data for low income and minority students in the state.”

In 2015-16, California ranked 41st among all states in spending per K-12 student after adjusting for differences in the cost of living in each state. California schools spent \$10,291 per K-12 student in 2015-16, which is about \$1,900 less than the \$12,252 per student spent by the nation as a whole, according to the California Budget and Policy Center. This lack of funding has clear effects when we observe how the state ranks for counselors (790 to 1), school nurses (ratio of 2,784 to 1, four times what the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends), administrators (315 to 1, 48th), and librarians (7,800 to 1, 51st).

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that, on average, California’s 4th and 8th graders score lower in all categories for all subjects compared to the national average, according to a 2015 report by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). These issues are exacerbated and scores are significantly lower where students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

Local Control Funding Formula is fully funded. What happens now?

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) will be “fully funded” in the 2018-19 budget year. The question now is: what happens next?

Full funding of LCFF means that all California school districts will get the level of per-pupil funding they received in 2007-08, adjusted for inflation. Schools were far from adequately funded at that time.

When LCFF was set up, it was anticipated that full funding would be achieved in 2020, but due to good economic times the goal will be reached in the next fiscal year.

Now the legislature must decide whether to change the funding formula or leave it as is.

There is general agreement in the education community that California schools are not funded at adequate levels. California’s per-pupil funding and staffing levels are far below national averages. Some school districts receive \$2,000 more per student than districts without high-needs children, but

other districts are struggling to make ends meet due to increased costs for special education, employee pension contributions, health care and other responsibilities.

AB 2808, by Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi, sets a new goal for LCFF: placing California in the top 10 states nationwide in school funding by increasing the base grant.

It is estimated this would require an additional \$35 billion. The bill does not establish a funding source, but it shifts the state’s focus from a fully funded formula to the aspiration of “fair and full funding for all schools, regardless of where you live,” Muratsuchi said.

AB 2808 is supported by California State PTA as well as numerous school districts and education organizations. It was approved by the Assembly Education Committee and the Appropriations Committee and is headed to the Assembly for a vote. It must also be approved by the State Senate and signed by the Governor in order to become law.

What is LCFF?

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is a simplified funding system established in 2013. Under LCFF, every school district receives a per-pupil base grant, with differing amounts for the grade levels of the students served. Districts also receive supplemental grants for each student who is an English learner, low-income or in foster care. (Children in more than one category are counted once.) Districts with more than 55 percent of students in those at-risk categories receive an additional concentration grant amount for each student over the 55 percent threshold.

School districts decide how to spend the funding, but they must describe their plans by developing Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs) with input from staff, parents and the community.

Almost 90 percent of state funding for schools comes through LCFF. The other 10 percent is funding that can only be used for specific purposes such as special education, after-school programs, home-to-school transportation and school lunches.