

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

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More money for education in Gov. Newsom's revised budget plan

With state tax revenues coming in at high levels, Gov. Gavin Newsom issued a "May revise" budget that includes more funding for education, especially for his two big education priorities: expanding early childhood programs and increasing the number of well-prepared teachers.

The proposed budget also would increase funding for special education, promote computer science education, help school districts deal with rising pension costs, and sock away money in an education rainy day fund.

Total 2019-20 funding for education, including early childhood programs, would be \$147 billion under the governor's proposal, about \$3.8 billion more than the current year.

Early childhood programs would receive about \$1.5 billion. This would be used to provide 10,000 new pre-school slots for low-income 4-year-olds, build or renovate kindergarten classrooms and childcare facilities, expand childcare services for low-income families, and create child savings accounts to prepare for college, among other programs.

To address the need for more science, math and special education teachers, especially in certain areas of the state, Gov. Newsom would allocate \$90 million to repay college loans for about 4,500 newly credentialed teachers who work in high-needs schools for at least four years. An additional \$45 million in one-time funding would provide training for teachers and school staff.

The revised budget calls for almost \$700 million to be allocated to special education, a 21 percent increase over the current year. The plan also includes \$500,000 in one-time money to help school districts draw down federal funds for medically-related special education services and to improve the transition of 3-year-olds with disabilities from regional centers to schools.

Gov. Newsom wants to make sure that all California students have access to computer science education. In pursuit of that goal, the budget includes \$15 million in one-time funding to help school districts install broad-

band infrastructure and \$1 million in one-time funding over four years to establish a state computer science coordinator who would implement new standards and promote computer science education.

During the past several years, school districts have been required to increase their contributions to the state retirement systems for teachers and other school employees, drawing significant amounts of money away from education programs. Gov. Newsom proposes a one-time \$150 million deposit into the teacher retirement fund, reducing districts' payments for the 2019-20 year.

The high level of tax revenues triggers a requirement for the state to put about \$400 million in an education Rainy Day Fund as a hedge against a future economic downturn.

The governor's proposal asks for almost \$1.7 billion to fund various programs that address the homelessness crisis. It also calls for tax credits and refunds to assist low-income families.

The May revision also proposes a statute that would "level the playing field for both traditional and charter schools," according to the budget document. The statute would:

- Prohibit charter schools from discouraging enrollment of students based on "academic achievement or student characteristic, such as special education status."
- Prohibit a charter school from requesting or requiring a prospective student's academic records.
- Create a process for families to report concerns to the authorizer of a charter school.
- Require the state Department of Education to examine the feasibility of using the state's student data system to identify possible enrollment disparities in charter schools.

During the next weeks state lawmakers will work with the governor to develop a final state budget. The state Constitution requires the legislators to complete the budget by June 15. The governor must sign it by June 30.

CAPTA's response to the Governor's revised budget proposal

California State PTA is glad to see that Governor Newsom's revised budget reflects the values of PTA: to positively impact the lives of all children and families.

This budget invests more in education, more in health services and more in supports for families. It also reflects a growing consensus on the importance of early education, mental health services and support for teachers.

Add to that list a significant investment to combat homelessness, which affects too many families and children in the state of California.

What's Missing?

It would be great to see more dedicated funding for after-school programs.

Does this solve the underfunding of California schools?

Overall, the budget is a smart investment of the funds available but it does not fix the long-term needs. As schools continue to struggle with growing expenses, we urge the governor and the legislature to develop a plan to bring California education funding to the levels of our highest-performing states.

CAPTA supports AB 39, which sets a new funding target for LCFF

A bill that would set a new target for the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) – with the intent of bringing California per-pupil funding up to the national average – was passed by the state Assembly in May and sent to the state Senate for consideration.

LCFF was set up in 2013 with the goal of achieving “full funding” by 2020. Full funding was defined as returning all California school districts to the level of per-pupil funding they received in 2007-08, adjusted for inflation. Schools were far from adequately funded at that time.

Due to good economic times, full funding was achieved in the 2018-19 school year.

AB 39, by Assembly Member Al Muratsuchi, would set a new goal for LCFF by increasing the base grant.

“California was, at one time, among the top ten states in K-12 per pupil funding, but now we rank among the lowest,” Assembly Member Muratsuchi said in a statement about the bill. “The new funding targets will set California on a path to reach the national average in per pupil

spending with the ultimate goal of returning our state to among the top ten in funding.”

It is estimated this would require an additional \$33 billion. The bill does not establish a funding source, but it shifts the state’s focus from a fully funded formula to a new target.

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 39 is supported by California State PTA as well as numerous school districts and education organizations. It must 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.

Summer is a good time to review this year’s LCAP process

As the school year draws to a close, your school district should be completing the update of its Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). Every California school district must adopt an LCAP describing how it will use its funding to achieve its goals and address the needs of all students. Parents, educators, students, school employees and the community must be involved in developing the plan.

Your school board must adopt the LCAP in conjunction with the district budget and submit it to the Orange County Department of Education for approval by July 1.

Summer is a good time to review the process and prepare for next year. California State PTA’s “Seasons of LCAP Development and Engagement” suggests the following activities:

LCAP outreach/parent engagement:

- Review and celebrate successes in outreach – what worked well?

- Draft a timeline for engagement and outreach for the upcoming year – what are existing opportunities to educate and engage parents?
- Survey parents and parent leaders about roadblocks to engagement and use the information when planning for the upcoming year.

Review and reflect on current LCAP:

- Does the LCAP provide a plan for all students to succeed and clearly outline actions the district will take to accomplish its goals?
- Has the district done an executive summary to communicate to stakeholders the key LCAP goals and actions?
- Is there a plan for meaningful, effective parent engagement?

You can find lots of information about LCAP at CAPTA.org.