

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

JUNE 2021

Proposed California education budget is largest in state history

It was the worst of times; it was the best of times, to paraphrase Dickens.

After 15 months of difficulties, uncertainty, and turmoil surrounding the pandemic, Governor Newsom is proposing a state budget that would bring California's K-12 education spending to \$121.7 billion, the highest level in state history. Per pupil funding would increase to \$13,977 in 2021-22, as compared to \$10,654 in the current year.

Newsom's May revised budget proposal provides funding for nearly every item on PTA's [wish list](#), including universal transitional kindergarten, community schools, special education, and student nutrition. PTA's only argument is with the governor's plan to incorporate distance learning into existing independent study programs. PTA believes a quality distance learning option should be available to students who cannot or do not want to attend school in person, and to prepare for future unanticipated events.

California began the current budget cycle expecting a huge deficit. While many people struggled financially during the pandemic, those in higher income brackets saw large increases in wealth as the stock market soared. This led to a boom in capital gains tax revenue and a projected budget surplus of almost \$76 billion. With the addition of \$25 billion in federal help, the state's total windfall is more than \$100 billion.

Newsom says this is a once-in-a-life opportunity to transform California's education system. Here are some of the highlights of his proposal:

- \$2 billion in one-time funding to support school reopening by providing testing and vaccine initiatives, enhanced cleaning, personal protective equipment, and improved ventilation.
- \$5 billion, spent over five years, for after-school and summer school programs in districts with the most low income students.
- \$3.3 billion to recruit, train and retain teachers.
- \$2.7 billion to phase in transitional kindergarten for

all 4-year-olds and reduce TK class sizes to 12.

- \$2.6 billion for high-intensity, in-school tutoring.
- \$2 billion to create a \$500 college savings account for current and future low-income first graders (\$1,000 for foster and homeless children).
- \$1.1 billion for additional counselors, nurses, aides and other support staff.
- \$150 million to upgrade school nutrition programs.
- \$3 billion to promote community schools, which provide mental health care, after-school programs, preschool, and other services to students and families.
- \$8.4 billion to pay down deferrals (money owed to schools). \$2.5 billion in deferrals would remain.
- \$18.5 in additional special education funding.
- \$9 billion to expand broadband access.
- \$1.3 billion for mental health services. (See page 2.)

Reaction from California State PTA

California State PTA is delighted that the proposed budget invests in long-time PTA priorities, including early education, summer school and after school programs, mental health, nutrition, community schools and targeted support for our most needy students.

We also strongly support many of the investments in families and children outside of the education budget that address poverty, climate change, and health and human services, particularly efforts to reduce child poverty.

We believe families need quality distance learning options for the coming school year and beyond. The Governor's current proposal to incorporate distance learning into independent learning fails to provide the on-going quality options students need.

PTA is advocating for a quality distance learning option that is equivalent to in-person learning for any family or student that needs it.

(Excerpt from CAPTA [press release](#))

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 15.

CAPTA Advocacy Webinar

Join California State PTA Director of Legislation Shereen Walter and members of the Legislation Team for a monthly webinar to discuss all the latest information.

The next webinar will take place on Wednesday, June 2, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Webinar registration link:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/31940121174953740>

If your computer does not have speakers or you otherwise have trouble hearing the audio once you've logged in, mute your speakers and call 1 (213) 929-4212 to hear the discussion. Use attendee PIN number 771-327-417. (Note: you cannot use this phone number to hear the webinar unless you register and log in through the above link first.)

Budget proposal includes mental health services for young people

The pandemic led to family worries about lapses in learning and missed social opportunities but also put a spotlight on the mental health issues that our students face. Many parents reported that their homebound children were suffering from depression and anxiety.

Studies done before the pandemic found that the rates of psychological distress, deep depression, and suicide among young people have risen during recent years.

A request to provide more mental health services through our schools was one of the messages we brought to state legislators as part of the Fourth District PTA Sacramento Safari in February.

Help is on the way. If the budget proposed by Governor Newsom is approved, school and community counseling programs will become available for every Californian through the age of 25.

The recently issued May budget revise proposes “a statewide and comprehensive transformation of the behavioral health system for all Californians age 25 and younger – changing the life trajectory of children so that

they can grow up to be healthier, both physically and mentally,” the budget summary states.

Services would be provided through several different programs. The \$1 billion Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative would help schools collaborate with community health organizations to provide individual and group counseling and other services to students. The initiative also would fund training for more mental health workers and an online portal where young people could access counseling sessions over video.

Newsom also proposes \$30 million for the Mental Health Student Services Act, which would offer grants to school districts, charter schools, county offices of education and other agencies to work with county health departments to provide more mental health services to students.

The funding that Newsom proposes to support community schools and to hire more school staff, including counselors, nurses, psychologists and social workers, would also provide more mental health resources at schools. (See page 1.)

Last chance to provide input on your school district’s LCAP

As we come to the end of the most difficult school year most of us have known, there is still an important task to tackle: providing input on your school district’s Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

The LCAP is an official document that describes how your school district will spend the state funding it receives through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). It must address eight state priorities dealing with basic services, state standards, course access, student achievement, other student outcomes, student engagement, parent involvement and school climate.

This year that plan will be more important than ever, as school districts devise tactics to address the impacts of the pandemic on our children, especially among students who are low-income, English learners, or in foster care.

Each school district is required to adopt an LCAP as part of its annual budget process. District administrators must seek input from various parent groups, including PTA, and from students, staff, and the community. The school board must approve the plan by the end of June and then submit it to the county department of education for review.

That means June is your last chance to be actively involved in the process.

As a PTA advocate you may already be working with your district to develop the LCAP. If not, there is lots of information on the California State PTA [website](#). Another

great resource is this Ed100 [blog](#), which includes a link to a handy LCAP Checklist with a template that will guide you through the process.

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, students, 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.