

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

FEBRUARY 2022

CAPTA priorities are funded in Governor's proposed budget

California State PTA is optimistic about the state budget proposal released by the Governor in January.

"We are pleased to see many PTA priorities in this budget proposal that includes an increase in Proposition 98 funding for the 2022-23 school year as well as adjustments to the current year (2021-22) and last year (2020-21)," said CAPTA President Carol Green in a [press statement](#). "This represents a three-year increase of \$16.1 billion over the level funded in the 2021 Budget Act."

Funding from Prop. 98 and other sources would amount to \$20,855 per pupil in the next fiscal year, the highest per-pupil funding level ever.

The Governor's budget includes money to continue and expand a number of efforts that are funded in the current budget, including:

- Expansion of Transitional Kindergarten and public preschools to serve more children and funding to add a second teacher or aide in each TK class.

Budget proposal is "incredibly bold"

Governor Newsom's proposed education budget is "incredibly bold" and fulfills goals that PTA has worked towards for decades, said Kevin Gordon at the California State PTA virtual advocacy briefing in January. Better yet, much of the funding would be an ongoing, permanent investment.

Gordon is president of Capitol Advisors Group, an expert on the education budget, and a frequent speaker at PTA events.

CAPTA has long pointed to California's position near the bottom of per-pupil funding as compared to other states. When the dust settles on this budget process, California will have moved remarkably far in our ranking nationwide, Gordon predicted.

The Governor is proposing "incredibly substantial" investments in early education, a longtime issue for PTA. The addition of Transitional Kindergarten for all students is the most fundamental change in California education in 100 years, Gordon said. The funding for this program would be ongoing and permanent.

Permanent funding also would be provided for extended learning efforts, which are especially important in

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- Funding to encourage early literacy by providing one-on-one and small group intervention for struggling readers, free books for toddlers, and multi-lingual school libraries.
- Programs to train and retain qualified teachers.
- Funding to lengthen the school day, provide quality before- and after-school programs, offer summer school and intersession education, and support arts and music programs.
- Additional money for Special Education.
- Money to assure that all students, regardless of eligibility, can receive two free meals every school day.
- Support for programs that assist students in pursuing careers in technology, healthcare, education and climate-related fields.
- Grants to allow districts to trade diesel school buses for cleaner electric vehicles.
- Almost \$1.4 billion over the next two fiscal years for school construction and renovation.

For more information:

- Governor's K-12 education budget [summary](#).
- Legislative Analyst's Office [overview](#) of the proposed budget.
- Carol Kocivar's description of the budget process, at [Ed100](#).



Please note change:



Sacramento Safari

will be virtual

March 7 and 8

Like last year's Safari, this will be a wonderful opportunity to hear from a variety of education experts and policy makers.

Please save the dates and watch for more information about speakers and schedules.

If you have already signed up, your registration fee will be reimbursed.

Sacramento Safari Virtual Sneak Peek

Friday, February 18

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

Report from the January 21 Advocacy Forum

Some responses to the pandemic will become permanent

Orange County schools districts found various ways to respond to the pandemic, according to superintendents from four local districts. Some of the changes they made proved so beneficial that they will become permanent.

All of the school districts were expanding technology in prior years, but the pandemic dramatically accelerated that process. Steps were taken to make sure every child had access to a personal device and to the internet. Teachers quickly learned how to present online instruction.

Kevin Gordon's comments on the proposed education budget

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the wake of the pandemic. The plan would include nine hours of core instruction, programs before and after school and during intersession, and summer school. Almost \$1 billion would be devoted to arts and music programs, another cherished goal for PTA. The biggest challenge for school districts, especially smaller districts, will be finding enough people to staff these mandatory programs. Gordon contends that Sacramento should allow some flexibility and let districts provide programs through community organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA and Think Together.

Another dramatic change in the proposed budget is funding to provide free school meals to all students, regardless of income level. (Some Orange County districts do this already.) While this gets rid of an expensive infrastructure to determine eligibility, it also eliminates the standard method to determine how many low income students attend the school. A new metric will have to be created, Gordon said.

The budget proposes \$3 billion for school construction and modernization, but this is not enough, according to Gordon. While overall school enrollment is dropping, about half of school districts in the state are still growing and many existing school buildings are in miserable condition. Lawmakers should also put a \$10 billion school construction bond on the ballot, he said.

The Governor's budget has a lot of money targeted for specific needs, but not enough for the base amounts that school districts receive through the Local Control Funding Formula. "This is like whittling away at the foundation of a house," said Gordon. The budget does include a cost of living adjustment. "That keeps you from sliding back, but it doesn't push you forward," he said. He gave a shout out to Capistrano Unified Council PTA and other PTAs that are campaigning to raise the base.

"These rapid advances in technology never would have happened without the pandemic," said Ann Silavs from Cypress School District. "I'm really pleased with the skills that teachers, students and staff have learned through this."

Some families found their students learned better through virtual means. Orange Unified has 800 students, some from other districts, enrolled in a live synchronous Virtual Academy, said Superintendent Dr. Gunn Marie Hansen

The shift to virtual communication also increased the connections between school and homes. Virtual parent-teacher conferences were more convenient for many moms and dads, resulting in more participation – as high as 98 percent in some schools, said Dr. Steve McLaughlin from Fullerton Joint Union High School District. Attendance at parent education programs also boomed, with as many as 1,000 parents taking part. "We wouldn't have room to do that that in person," said Dr. Andrew Pulver from Los Alamitos Unified.

Mental health was another area where existing efforts were quickly expanded with the help of the Orange County Department of Education, the Orange County Health Care Agency, CHOC, and others. Schools added wellness spaces, onsite counselors, and 24/7 online mental health support for students and families from community organizations. Sports, drama and music programs were reopened as soon as possible. Some districts also tried to reduce stress for teachers by lowering class sizes, eliminating combo classes, reducing the number of in-service programs and offering regular wellness forums for all staff.

To address learning loss, especially in elementary grades, districts added summer school programs, free online tutoring services, and classroom assistants

All of the superintendents lauded their district employees – administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff – for their "Herculean efforts" to provide services to their students.

"Never underestimate the power of people," said Dr. Pulver. "Teachers, staff and parents really stepped up and this led to an amazing level of innovation."

CAPTA briefings and office hours

The next California State PTA advocacy briefing and office hour virtual meeting will be held Tuesday, February 15, at 7 p.m.

To register to join the monthly advocacy briefing and office hour zoom meetings [click here](#).