

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

FEBRUARY 2024

Governor's initial budget plan maintains education funding

Gov. Newsom's initial state [budget](#) proposal preserves or increases funding for most education programs, even though a substantial deficit is expected.

The governor assumes the state will have a \$37.8 billion deficit over three years. This is \$30 billion less than the deficit predicted by the Legislative Analyst's Office. The governor plans to deal with the shortfall by dipping into state reserves, cutting or delaying some expenditures, deferring payments and other maneuvers.

Funding for K-12 schools and community colleges would be reduced by about \$11.3 billion over three years (2022-2025). Despite this, funding for schools is expected to remain relatively steady, with an average per-pupil expenditure of \$23,519 from all funding sources (as compared to \$20,855 in last year's budget).

The proposed budget includes the following expenditures:

- \$6 million to develop ways of addressing student absence.
- \$20 million to support implementation of the new math framework.
- \$25 million to train teachers to screen for literacy problems, including dyslexia, something California State PTA strongly supported.

- \$7 million to support inquiry-based science instruction.
- \$300 million for the state's poorest schools.
- \$122 million to increase funding for universal school meals.
- \$5 million to increase support for the California Cradle-to-Career Data System.
- \$500 million to convert school buses to zero-emission.

Newsom's plan would delay the payment of \$550 million for new and retrofitted facilities for transitional kindergarten and would cut \$500 million from the School Facilities Program. Funding for county offices of education would decrease by \$5 million.

The governor's proposal is only the first step in the six-month budget process. State legislators will look at the plan and hold committee hearings to discuss their own ideas. In May, after most tax revenues have been collected, everyone will have a better idea of how much money the state has to work with. The governor will issue his "May revise" budget proposal and will continue to negotiate with lawmakers.

State law requires the legislators to complete a budget by June 15 and the governor to sign it by June 30.

For more information about the budget, go to [Ed100](#) and [EdSource](#).

What is the Cradle-to-Career Data System?

The [Cradle-to-Career Data System](#) (CCDS) is a longitudinal database designed to track California youngsters from early childhood into their working careers. CCDS will allow educators, policy-makers, parents and the public to determine which programs and strategies are the most effective in assuring student success over the long term. It will also allow state lawmakers to make more informed budget and policy decisions.

The CCDS will be available to the public. Parents and students will have access to analytical tools, summaries of key student and employment outcomes, and a research library. Students and their families can use these features to assist them with college and career planning, college-eligibility monitoring, electronic transcripts, and access to financial aid and other services. Individual information about students will be kept private.

The development of the CCDS began in 2019 and it is expected to be fully functional by the 2025-26 school year.



For nonpartisan information about candidates, go to [vote411.org](#), a service of the League of Women Voters Education Fund.

Enter your home address and find out who is on your ballot.

All candidates are invited to answer the same questions, provide contact and campaign information, and list their endorsements.

Information about ballot propositions, including arguments for and against, is also provided.

PTA advocates share ideas at Fourth District PTA roundtable

PTA members from around Orange County gathered at the January Advocacy Forum for a roundtable discussion and idea-sharing session. (Okay, the table was square but the ideas were great.)

Amy Wang-Liao presented the Student Advocacy Program that is co-sponsored by the Irvine Unified Council of PTAs and Irvine Unified School District. Every year, 30 to 40 students from the district's seven high schools, along with district representatives and parents, go to Sacramento for a one-day trip to meet with legislators and education experts. Prior to the trip the students receive a binder of information about California government as it relates to education. They attend six weekly panel discussions involving district leaders, school board members, employee union leaders, and the district's lobbyist. Amy is happy to share information and invited interested persons to attend upcoming panel discussions. You can contact her at Advocacy@IUCPTA.org

Encouraging students to speak up on issues that are important to them is a very effective way to advocate, said Keri Baert, president of the Trabuco Hills High School PTSA. The students on this PTSA board were concerned about student safety outside the school, which is located at the intersection of two busy streets. The PTSA sent a letter to the City of Mission Viejo asking for a safety zone at the school. They were directed to the city traffic commission, which decided that creating a safety zone would inconvenience drivers. PTSA members then attended the January City Council meeting, where the students expressed their concerns. Success! The City Council voted 5-0 to create the safety zone.

With school board elections coming up in the fall, PTA councils should think about presenting candidate forums. Martha Fluor described how Harbor Council presented a forum with 10 candidates two years ago. She emphasized that PTA is a nonprofit organization and it is important to follow IRS rules and ensure that the event is nonpartisan. All candidates must be invited. The Harbor Council forum committee developed a list of questions with the help of PTA guidelines and used PTA moderators who did not live in the district. Martha is happy to help anyone planning a forum. You can contact her at marthabeyondtheboard2020@gmail.com.

Andrea Yamasaki described the Legislative Coalition in the Orange Unified School District. This is a committee of the OUSD school board and is open to parents from all district schools. School district administrators, school board members, leadership from classified and certificated employee associations, and field representatives from state and federal legislative offices participate in the monthly meetings. The meetings include reports from the school district and from legislators' representatives. The coalition has its own 501c3 designation and a board of officers.

Luca Grecu and Jessica Geyer described their (so far unsuccessful) attempts to pass a school facilities bond in the Capistrano Unified School District. Helpful suggestions were offered, but they have already tried all of those. Capo's very active Advocacy Team has launched a "Keep the Promise" campaign to urge Congress to pay districts for 40 percent of the costs to serve special needs students, as was promised when the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed in 1975. Capo currently receives about 6 to 8 percent of the \$99 million annual cost to serve special education students. Jessica urged PTA members to find out how much their own school districts are receiving and to join the campaign.

Sacramento Safari 2024

If you are attending Sacramento Safari be sure to go to these two important meetings:

Safari Orientation

Tuesday, February 20 at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom

Safari Debrief

Friday, March 15 at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom

Watch your email for Zoom links to the meetings!



Voting in California Primary starts soon

Vote-by-mail ballots for the 2024 Primary Election will be mailed to voters beginning on February 5. In-person voting opportunities will also be available.

In addition to choosing nominees for President, voters will cast their ballots for a Senator to replace Dianne Feinstein, who died in September. There are two contests for the one office and voters may vote in both. One contest is a special election (required by state law) to fill the unfinished Senate term that ends in January 2025. One person will win that election. The other contest is for the regular 6-year term that runs from January 2025 to January 2031. The top two vote recipients in this race will run in the November General Election.

Other positions on the ballot include Congressional representatives, state senators and assembly members, judges, three members of the county board of education, two members of the county board of supervisors and several city measures.

Ballot drop-off locations will open on February 5. Some in-person Vote Center locations will open on February 24 and all will be open from March 2 through Election Day, March 5. For more information, see your sample ballot or [OCVote.gov](https://ocvote.gov).