



Volume 39, Number 5

June 2015

Advocacy news from the California State PTA Legislation Team

To learn more about the California State PTA positions on bills currently before the California Legislature, click [HERE](#).

Budget passes on time; bills progress to second house

After months of anticipation – during which California State PTA and the education community have been actively advocating to provide for the needs of children – state lawmakers accomplished a major milestone in their work with the on-time passage of California’s 2015-16 budget. There is a lot to like in this budget, but schools and kids are still not adequately funded (for more details, please see our [media statement](#) and the article below).

From now until the annual month-long summer recess starting in mid-July, the Legislature will be working on bills that have passed one house and are moving on to the other. Many of the bills California State PTA supports fall into that category. As a result, our Legislation Team will be busy with advocacy work to ensure PTA-supported bills make it successfully through the legislative process and become law.

For more information, please contact Director of Legislation Kathy Moffat at legislation@capta.org.

At the end of this month, my term as Director of Legislation comes to an end. It has been my pleasure to work with you all in that capacity. Please join me in welcoming Shayne Silva as our new Director of Legislation, and in wishing her well. As of July 1, Shayne’s contact address will be legislation@capta.org.

Governor gets his way with the budget

After some speculation about possible increases over his May revision, California’s final state budget for the 2015-16 fiscal year looks much like what Governor Jerry Brown proposed in mid-May. Children are the prime beneficiaries of the small increase that occurred in the final budget, as compared with the May revision.

The big news for children is in child care and health care. This budget increases by almost 13,800 the number of slots for preschool and childcare. In addition, it provides healthcare coverage to all undocumented children.

K-12 schools will get just a slight increase over what the governor proposed in May. The average funding level – across all program areas – is \$9,942 per pupil, up from \$8,931 in 2014-15. That amount includes funding for the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and this budget will bring LCFF funding to 90 percent of full implementation. Other elements of the budget remain much as stated in the May revision.

In the weeks since the May revision, there had been much speculation about the final budget. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) projected about \$3 billion more in revenue than the California Department of Finance. The speculation centered on how much the Legislature would propose spending and how that spending might differ from the governor's budget proposal. The Legislature did use the LAO's projection to build its proposed budget, but in the end the governor prevailed and the final budget was only slightly larger than what he had proposed in May. The LAO provides [extensive detail on the budget](#).

The governor also called for two special sessions of the Legislature, which began on June 19, to look at how to fund increasing medical costs and infrastructure.

As stated in the May *Sacramento Update*, while funding for children in California is better than it has been in years, it is still not sufficient to meet all of our children's many needs. In addition, we must remember that this budget is based on taxes from Proposition 30 that will expire in a few years. If schools and children's programs are to maintain this level of funding, new revenue sources must be found.

For more information, please contact Budget and Education Finance Advocate Shayne Silva at ssilva@capta.org.

California Assembly passes PTA-supported SB 277 (Pan) on vaccination of school children

On June 25, in dramatic fashion, against a backdrop of months of impassioned rhetoric, the California Assembly **passed SB 277 (Pan)** that would discontinue the use of personal beliefs as criteria to exempt children from the school attendance requirement that they be fully vaccinated. California State PTA strongly supports this bill.

PTA, both nationally and in California, has been a strong supporter of vaccinations. Beginning in 1925, National PTA was a driving force behind providing check-ups to identify health problems in five- to six-year-olds entering school for the first time.

This became the main vehicle for immunizing children against diseases. In 1976, PTA adopted a resolution on immunization, and in 1990 adopted another on the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccination. Both were sent on to National PTA, and they were adopted there, as well.

These resolutions — *Immunization Awareness and Education Programs* and *Measles (Rubeola*)*, *Mumps and Rubella Vaccinations* — give us the authority to support SB 277. As an advocacy organization, one of PTA's most basic, foundational tenets is that we actively work "to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth" while always reflecting the philosophy that our members have adopted.

The Center for Disease Control states that immunizations today are extremely safe and one of the most effective public health measures. As Senator Pan, who is a pediatrician, has pointed out in many briefings to PTA audiences, the vaccines involved in his bill have been extensively researched and are proven and accepted worldwide as safe and efficacious. Their use has saved millions of lives.

Rob Ring, the Chief Science officer for "Autism Speaks", an advocacy organization supporting those affected by autism states, "Over the last two decades, extensive research has asked whether there is any link between childhood vaccinations and autism. The results of this research are clear: Vaccines do not cause autism. We urge that all children be fully vaccinated."

A recent Los Angeles Times article cited research from Johns Hopkins, MIT, and Boston Children's Hospital showing that the recent spread of measles across southern California was fueled by the increasing number of vaccine refusals. The more people who refuse vaccines, the more likely it is that highly contagious, preventable diseases will take hold in our communities. On the other hand, if over 96 percent of medically eligible people receive vaccines, our community is protected. Community immunity decreases the possibility that a pathogen can find a human host to infect, thus stopping the spread of disease. This community immunity protects our youngest children, individuals who medically cannot get vaccinated, and those whose immune systems are compromised.

We strengthen our community and protect the most vulnerable by requiring all medically eligible children to be vaccinated against dangerous – and preventable – diseases like measles, mumps polio, and whooping cough before they enter school. PTA believes it is our public duty to do so.

We applaud Senator Richard Pan and co-author Senator Ben Allen for their leadership in bringing forward this ground-breaking and vital legislation to protect children. Now, as this Sacramento Update goes to press, we are fervently hoping

that PTA voices will continue to speak out strongly for the protection of all kids, and that SB 277 will become law with the governor's signature very soon!

For more information, please contact Health Advocate Cathy Hall at chall@capta.org.

School facilities bond bills in focus

There are several bills that deal with state assistance to local schools and districts for school facilities construction and modernization. As you may know, the state has no funds left to assist local districts with facilities, as the last bond was passed in 2006, and those funds are now exhausted.

[SB 114 \(Liu\)](#) makes changes to the existing School Facility Program and authorizes the Kindergarten-Grade 12 Public Education Facilities Bond Act of 2016 to provide for the issuance of an unspecified amount of general obligation bonds for construction and modernization of education facilities to become effective if approved by voters at the November 8, 2016 statewide general election.

Among the provisions of SB 114 are that school districts comply with a requirement that they have a long-range school facilities master plan and that the district conduct an inventory of existing facilities and submit it to the State Allocation Board for its statewide school facilities inventory. The bill expands the definition of modernization to include replacement, and would allow school districts flexibility in designing school facilities.

The bill was heard on the Senate floor the first week of June, but did not receive the requisite two-thirds vote for passage of a statewide bond bill. Instead, the votes fell along partisan lines. Having been granted urgency, the author is working to achieve the votes needed in the next couple of weeks.

Other bills on this topic – **[AB 148 \(Holden\)](#)** and **[AB 1088 \(O'Donnell\)](#)** – are no longer moving this year.

A ballot initiative that also addresses school facilities is currently being circulated for signatures. It is sponsored by the California Association for School Housing (CASH) and the California Building Industry Association (CBIA). California State PTA will watch the initiative's progress and consider taking a position on it if it qualifies for the ballot.

For more information, please contact Director of Legislation Kathy Moffat at legislation@capta.org.

Overhauling teacher evaluation – SB 499 and AB 575

California's teacher evaluation system has needed an update for years. The current

system, established by the Stull Act in 1971, no longer meets today's needs. [SB 499 \(Liu\)](#) and its companion from the Assembly, [AB 575 \(O'Donnell\)](#), are written to establish a new system, and California State PTA has adopted a "Support if Amended" position on both.

These important bills are identical and would require school districts, via the collective bargaining process, to adopt a teacher evaluation and support system with specific components. It also outlines specific evaluation criteria for school administrators.

California State PTA believes teacher evaluation should:

- Measure both student learning and teacher effectiveness.
- Be transparent.
- Provide teachers with clear expectations and regular feedback.
- Allow districts flexibility to devise a system that meets their needs.
- Consist of multiple measures.
- Occur in a planned, regular and ongoing manner.

We support these components of AB 575 and SB 499:

- Using criteria based on California Standards for the Teaching Profession.
- Adding a third performance level for teachers.
- Requiring multiple observations.

But we have concerns about:

- The need for more robust training for evaluators.
- Reliability of statewide standardized test scores (we recommend limiting the use of state standardized tests until enough time has passed to evaluate the efficacy of the tests and to aggregate statistically reliable data).
- The possibility of allowing collective bargaining to determine student achievement goals.

California State PTA has asked the authors for amendments in both bills to address these concerns.

In addition, we recommend that school districts study the examples of several successful, newly-established systems and possibly learn from those models. State PTA also sees a concern with the way the public comment process is designed. We believe it can be more streamlined while still meeting the need for transparency.

California's students deserve highly qualified teachers and administrators. Teachers and administrators deserve an evaluation process that supports growth and improvement and recognizes excellence. The time has come for a new and improved teacher evaluation system in our state. We will continue to advocate for

appropriate changes in AB 575 and SB 499 so that they may establish just such a system.

For more information, please contact Education Advocate Donna Artukovic at dartukovic@capta.org.

PTA supports stronger restrictions for teen drivers

Reckless and distracted driving is the number-one killer of teens in America. California State PTA is supporting [**AB 235 \(Frazier\)**](#), which would strengthen current state laws that already place restrictions on teens during their first year behind the wheel.

According to [Impact Teen Drivers](#), 75 percent of teen driving fatalities are not drug- and alcohol-related. Distractions, recklessness, and inexperience are behind most teen driving collisions. Teen drivers with teen passengers in the vehicle are twice as likely to be involved in a fatal crash as teen drivers traveling alone. The crash risk increases with each additional passenger.

California has Graduated Driver License (GDL) restrictions in place to help provide a safe environment for teens learning to drive. Once a teen has a provisional driver's license, he or she must follow the GDL safety restrictions for one year. These restrictions are:

- Unless accompanied by a licensed driver age 25 or older:
 - No driving between 11:00 pm and 5:00 am unless for school.
 - No passengers under the age of 20.
- No cell phone or wireless communication devices, hands-free or otherwise.

Under current law, teens can legally drive anytime and with passengers in the car after one year of safe driving with a provisional license. [**AB 235 \(Frazier\)**](#) would extend the provisions limiting nighttime driving and passengers for all teen drivers until the age of 18. AB 235 has passed through the Assembly and has been assigned to the Transportation and Housing Committee in the Senate.

For more information, please contact Community Concerns Advocate Shereen Walter at swalter@capta.org.

Sexual health education in need of an update

The California Healthy Youth Act, [**AB 329 \(Weber\)**](#), is a broad-concept bill that will update the Education Code section that addresses comprehensive sexual health

education. Its provisions are consistent with California State PTA's position that quality sex education is critical for all our young people's health.

Currently, California law distinguishes between HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) prevention and sex education. This causes confusion for schools, school boards and teachers. Educators need support to teach this sensitive topic and students need to have medically accurate, age-appropriate information. AB 329 (Weber) will update the Education Code and provide better guidance to schools, teachers and families.

HIV prevention education has been mandated since 1992. This bill will correct outdated information and integrate sexual health education into the current HIV prevention mandate, thus creating a unified curriculum that will support both students and their teachers. The bill calls for a broader foundation for sex education that addresses issues like gender and sexual identity, promoting healthy dating relationships and preventing other sexually-transmitted infections (STIs), and unintended pregnancy.

Key provisions of the bill include:

- Students will receive medically-accurate, age-appropriate information on HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy prevention that includes – but is not limited to – delaying sexual activity.
- Requirements for instruction and materials that are appropriate for students of all genders and sexual orientations.
- Retention of the passive consent feature of previous legislation: a written parental opt-out of the class.

The California Healthy Youth Act addresses the many aspects of youth sexuality, but only in high school health classes is the curriculum focused on the students themselves. It gives students the knowledge to act responsibly and safely, thus helping to prevent HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, dating violence and pregnancy, plus acknowledging and affirming sexual orientation and gender identity.

California students need access to complete, accurate information to protect their sexual health at whatever point in their lives they become sexually active. Quality sex education is critical for all our young people's health. California State PTA's support of AB 329 (Weber) is consistent with our newly adopted resolution: *LGBTQ+ Inclusiveness in Health Education* ([view PDF](#)).

For more information, please contact Health Advocate Cathy Hall at chall@capta.org.

Career technical education – what's next?

California State PTA supports the strengthening of Career Technical Education (CTE). We believe building better partnerships between schools, community colleges and businesses is a wise investment in California's future economy.

Employers continue to struggle to find competent, highly-skilled workers and CTE programs can help alleviate that struggle.

High-quality CTE courses give students real-world, relevant learning opportunities. They can also keep kids in school. Many adolescents see little relevance in school. They have trouble making the connection between their school work and the real world. CTE connects the two. In fact, 81 percent of dropouts say relevant, real-world learning would have kept them in school. National data also show that students who concentrate in CTE programs are much more likely to graduate. Further, over 70 percent of CTE concentrators pursued some kind of postsecondary education after graduating from high school.

Despite these successes, California's investment in CTE is at an historic low. When school districts were facing budget cuts, enrollment and instructor retention plummeted. We lost nearly 50,000 students and 1,400 CTE courses between 2011 and 2013. Since CTE courses were not part of graduation requirements, there was a disincentive for districts to fund CTE.

The governor's January budget included \$876 million for CTE grants, and his May revision added an additional \$150 million. Although this additional money is greatly appreciated and applauded by CTE advocates, it does not begin to make up for the past losses. Building and maintaining career technical education is expensive and time-consuming and require trained professionals to organize and run the programs.

California State PTA supports the following bills, which are intended to build and maintain career technical education:

- [**SB 148 \(McGuire\)**](#) allots additional funds beyond the governor's budget for grants available to local education agencies (LEAs) for the development and enhancement of high-quality career technical education programs. This bill has passed the Senate and has moved to the Assembly.
- [**SB 618 \(Pavley\)**](#) establishes a grant program to assist in the development of educational apprenticeship programs and provides clear pathways for students to gainful employment in emerging industries that are relevant to the local community. This bill has been held in Senate appropriations suspense.
- [**AB 288 \(Holden\)**](#) authorizes a partnership between community colleges and school districts to develop direct pathways for career technical education. This bill has passed the Assembly and moved to the Senate.

For more information, please contact Education Advocate Donna Artukovic at dartukovic@capta.org.

California State PTA Legislation Action Committee

California State PTA Legislation Action Committee (LAC) meets during the legislative session and takes action on pending state and federal legislation based on PTA's priorities and adopted authorities.

The LAC includes the director of legislation, president, president-elect, executive director, vice presidents or representatives from the commissions for communications, community concerns, education, health and family engagement, two district presidents and others as may be appointed by the president. This committee shall meet on call upon the approval of the president.

For more information, please refer to the Advocacy section of [California State PTA Toolkit](#). Click [here](#) to view currently adopted positions on legislation. For more information, or to inquire if a bill is under consideration by California State PTA, contact the director of legislation at legislation@capta.org.

www.capta.org