

**State PTA Legislation Conference: February 21- 22, 2010
Sacramento, California**

Connecting the Dots: From Issues to Advocacy

Executive Summary

By: Kim Anderson

CUCPTSA Attendees: Lori Abbott, Kim Anderson and Alli Maier

Total attendees: approximately 160

Heard from 14 guest speakers:

Anthony Adams - Assembly Member, Hesperia

Danny Alvarez - Staff Director of Senate Education Committee

Ron Bennett - President of School services of California

Julia Brownley, Chair - Assembly Education Committee

Lupita Cortez Alcala - CDE Deputy Superintendent, Governmental Affairs

Kevin Gordon – President, School Innovations & Advocacy

Mary Hayashi - Assembly Member, Hayward

Tim Hodson - Center for California Students

Debbie Look - California State PTA (CAPTA) Director of Legislation

Jo Loss - CAPTA President

Scott Plotkin - Executive Director of California School Boards Association (CSBA)

Jean Ross - Director of California Budget Project

Patty Scriptor - CAPTA Education Advocate

Rick Simpson – Deputy Chief of Staff to Speaker Karen Bass

Highlights and things we heard consistently include:

- State PTA is taking a three pronged approach in its current advocacy by:
 1. Opposing the Governor's proposed budget for 2010-11 which further cuts education and critical children's services. Will be unveiling our comprehensive "Stand Up for California's 9 Million kids" advocacy strategy shortly.
 2. Supporting qualifying the "Local Control of Local Classrooms Funding Act" which would lower the threshold for passage of local school funding measures to 55%, from the current 2/3, and also urging PTA members to sign the petition and to actively participate in gathering signatures.
 3. Joining the school finance lawsuit against the State of California, along with the California School Boards Association and the Association of California School Administrators. The premise is that the funding mechanism for Education is fundamentally unconstitutional.
- Huge need to give school districts more local control of their in every possible way. That would include property taxes funneling into local school funding and lowering the parcel tax passage threshold from the current 2/3 to 55%.

- Prop 98 & Prop 13 models need to be revisited...
 - Ø Prop 98, as a funding mechanism, has been so manipulated that it has become practically worthless to the education community as a safety net.
 - Ø We want a locally funded system, not a state funded system. We are one of the only school systems in the nation funded this way. Everyone else is funded locally through property taxes.
- State is facing a \$20 billion deficit over next 16 months and it will be even tougher to bridge the gap, because all easy solutions have been used up.
- Urge our legislators to uphold the July 2009 budget agreement; cutting education by an additional \$2.4 billion, as the Governor is proposing, is breaking that agreement.
- Long term reason for the budget crisis is the passage of Proposition 13, and the short term reason is the economy.
- The 2/3 vote to pass a budget is a big problem, especially with the Assembly Republicans willing to hold the line.
- From 1929-1935, a 6-year period at the height of The Depression, the per-pupil spending went down 25%. In the last 2 years, the per-pupil spending has gone down 18%.
- Compared to the national average in per student funding: California was down \$700 last year, down \$1700 this year, and will be down approx. \$1950 next year.
- Regarding RTTT Funding: still unknown if California will get any money in the first round – we'll find out in April.

Notable quotes:

- We need to tell our legislators: I don't care that you signed a 'no new taxes' pledge – your hands are not tied behind your back... *Scott Plotkin*
- There has been a reduction in cash assistance programs to the point where it is less than in 1989... *Jean Ross*
- The cumulative effect of budget cuts on CSU and UC is that CSU is capping enrollment. Egalitarian views (everyone who qualifies gets a college education) are being swept by the wayside... *Tim Hodson*
- We are behind and falling further behind and have the largest class sizes in the nation... *Ron Bennett*
- Education is a moral issue, a civil rights issue and an economic issue... *Julia Brownley*
- If anything, Race To The Top (RTTT) was a great drill... *Lupita Cortez Alcala*
- ESEA is moving in this RTTT direction anyway, so these types of changes were going to happen at some point... *Patty Scripter*
- For every \$1 spent on preventive dental care, it saves \$4 in treatment... *Mary Hayashi*
- Thinking about budget solutions in relation to our moral responsibility is very challenging... *Danny Alvarez*
- We should EXPECT our politicians to establish priorities for our State and then link them together... *Anthony Adams*
- Perhaps there is a connection between a kid dropping out of school and ending up committing a crime... *Kevin Gordon*
- Having 1 person's "no" vote bearing more weight than 1 person's "yes" vote, fundamentally offends me... *Rick Simpson*

