Tom Torlakson - State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI)

Report by: Bev Berryman
4th District PTA Advocacy Team Member
Fullerton

SPI Torlakson began his remarks by referring to PTA as a “powerful group of leaders” and said he was glad to be speaking in his new capacity. He said that the one trait that unites us is the fact that we are all optimistic and we can make a difference with everyone working together; parents, teachers, friends, etc.

As a former high school teacher, he has seen that the recent reductions to the budget have been severe. He compared the resources of the 1970’s to a science class now. He stated that we need to bring the resources to our children.

He has declared a State of Emergency for education to bring attention to the fact that our schools can no longer function if more reductions are made to the education budget. The general public still sees that schools are open, test scores are on the rise, and our students still have a safe environment. People do not see that we have issues unseen by the general public. With our help, we can bring funding issues to the forefront.

He discussed the importance of extending the temporary taxes in order to restore order and stability to our budget. He stated that in a June special election there is normally a very low turnout. We need to encourage everyone to vote.

California needs to invest in the future of our students. He called for the continuation of the investment that we are making in our schools. Must energize everyone and begin an informational campaign to share the knowledge with everyone. He encouraged everyone to visit the members in office and tell them that it is important to link arms and share the conversations.

He spoke about improving collaboration with all levels of education - Kindergarten through College. Unfortunately, higher education will be taking a big hit with the new budget. We have spent years advocating to students to go to college and now due to funding, they are turning away many students. He spoke about working with all of the CEO’s of our educational intuitions to coordinate a continual “Plan for Education” that includes all levels.

He talked about his priorities which are: Career Tech Education (CTE), STEM, obesity, literacy, Going green and becoming more efficient and smarter, equalization of funding, technology in schools – to name a few.

He ended by repeating that our voices are critical and we will get through the crises and together we will prevail. He also invited everyone to become his friend on Facebook.

Ted Lempert - President, Children Now

Report by: Kim Anderson
4th District PTA Advocacy Roundtable Chair
Laguna Niguel

Children Now is a non-partisan research and advocacy organization, based in Oakland, working to raise children’s well-being to the top of the national policy agenda.
• Why is having an outstanding education system and good healthcare so difficult when it's the one issue that unites us?
• The problem isn’t the politicians or the public – they all care about kids. The problem is the “interest group politics of today” where kids are not adequately represented.
• PTA is consulted about what to do on kids issues but they’re not the first group and they should be.
• Groups who care about kids need to figure out a way to all get on the exact same page and speak together with one message.
• For 2011, Children Now put an agenda together of the top ten high-priority, high impact actions California’s policy makers should take to reverse the declining status of children:
  1. Adopt a comprehensive P-12 education revenue and reform package that establishes an equitable and adequate finance system.
  2. Set standards for student success and fiscal oversight.
  3. Implement a high quality early learning and development system for all children from birth to age 5.
  4. Strengthen the state’s afterschool infrastructure and build summer programs.
  5. Establish a strong data system that connects early learning through higher education.
  7. Provide every California child with affordable healthcare coverage and access to quality care.
  8. Decrease number of children with dental issues as that leads to missed school days.
  9. Reduce obesity rates.
  10. Provide better support for children in the welfare and foster care systems.

To learn more or to read this report in full, please go to www.childrennow.org

PTA Priority Issues - Small Group Discussions

Report By: Kim Anderson

Legislation Conference attendees were divided up into six groups and the State PTA Advocates went round to each one with their respective Commission VP’s and shared the top priorities from their area.

The Advocate’s top priorities are…

Community Concerns: Advocate – Patty Christiansen; VP - Brian Bonner
  ý Assistance to Families in Need
  ý Achievement Gap
  ý Chronic Truancy

Education 1: Advocate - Patty Scripter; VP - Suzan Solomon
  ý Parent Empowerment & Open Enrollment
  ý Great Teachers and Great Leaders
  ý Common Core Standards & Assessments

Education 2: Advocate – Nancy Vandell; VP - Suzan Solomon
  ý Special Education
  ý Linked Learning & CTE
  ý Arts Education

Health: Advocate – Shayne Silva; VP – Colleen You
  ý Chronic Disease
  ý Healthy Lifestyles
  ý Mental Health Issues
  ý Oral Health

Parent Involvement: Advocate – Michael Butler; VP – Becky Reece
Panel discussion - Education Reform

Sue Burr - Executive Director, California County Superintendents
Educational Services Association (CCSESA)
Sherry Skelly Griffith - Legislative Advocate, Association on California
School Administrators (ACSA)
Patricia Rucker - California State Board of Education (SBE)

Report by: Erin Jenks
4th District PTA Advocacy Team Member
Buena Park

Sue Burr - CCSESA:
1. CA Superintendents - 53 of 58 are elected positions. Superintendents have fiscal responsibility for each
district.
2. The number of schools districts in fiscal distress has multiplied by five since 2007-08. This is directly
attributed to the $18 billion, or $1,900 per student, in cuts to education in the last three years.
3. CA State Board of Education has adopted the national common core standards. Forty states have
adopted these. Since California was used as part of development, only minor adjustments were made to
existing standards.
   a. Standards determine curriculum, text books purchased and teacher performance and
development.
   b. Grants are available to develop common assessments by 2014-2015.
4. Federal law (ESEA) – parent choice/open enrollment
   a. Allows for eleven different options – can complicate the process.

Sherry Skelly Griffith - ACSA:
1. What impact did federal reforms have on NCLB?
   a. School personnel to form committee to anticipate changes. Committee will include principals,
superintendents and others.
   b. California panel includes Susan Davis from San Diego, Judy Chu from Los Angeles, Buck McKeon
from Santa Clarita, Duncan Hunter from San Diego (chairman), George Miller from Concord (minority
ranking leader).
2. Four themes in blueprint for reform:
   a. College/career readiness
   b. Defining what makes effective teachers and leaders (defined by state)
   c. Use of data to improve teaching.
   d. Performance, proficiency and student growth over time.
3. Common core determines what students should know by the end of high school.
   a. Differential growth between higher and lower performing schools will include whether growth was
exhibited.
   b. What will replace AYP (average yearly performance)?
   c. How will curriculum be developed – on-line, seat time.
   d. How/ what about teacher development?
   e. What/how will bridge be developed as new cores are implemented?
Several bills: SB 140 (Lowenthal) is the “Bridge to Common Core”; AB124 (Fuentes) ensures we align ELD standards properly and AB 250 (Brownley) ensures coordination between testing materials and support material.

**Patricia Rucker - SBE:**

1. She is one of the newly appointed state School Board of Education members by Governor Brown. He recently made seven appointments. This is not a “re-start” but a “re-set.”
   a. Responsibilities include implementation of common core standards
   b. What is central and foundational
   c. What do we want our children to know/become as they progress through school.
   d. Implementation of common core standards
2. State board takes federal mandates and implements into practice as it pertains to our state.
3. Need to have a common and shared vision –
   a. high quality education for all students.
   b. Learn from mistakes, not look for blame.
   c. Adequate and well trained staff –teachers and support staff.
   d. Ensure adequate funding
   e. Ensure reforms trickle up to college
   f. Have a plan of action and accountability

**Questions:**

1. How accurate are rankings and why are we so low when we have such high standards? 
   Ranking has dropped as funding has declined.

2. How does arts education come into play with new common core standards?
   Currently no federal arts standards - standards are only for math, English Language Arts and some science. California has arts standards/initiative in partnership with Hewlett Packard. The arts have to be implemented through cross curricular activities.

3. Will we continue to rate schools and teachers by test scores?
   Less federal mandates, more flexibility to be given to individual states. Demonstration of knowledge will not be determined by test scores alone, but by project based learning.

**Dinner speaker - George Skelton**

**Political Columnist, Los Angeles Times**

Report by: Patty Jordan
4th District PTA President
Anaheim

George Skelton began by talking about Jerry Brown. He feels Jerry Brown is “stuck” because of his campaign promise to not raise taxes without going to the voters. He feels the Governor should go the legislature for a tax increase and let them put pressure on both parties to vote for a tax increase. He feels it wouldn’t matter to Brown since he probably won’t run for a second term.

The population says they want change but then will not vote to approve a tax increase. People know things are bad but aren’t “hurting” enough yet to vote for the increase. We can’t have it all.

Get rid of large pensions and unfunded lifetime benefits. We need pension reform. We have out of control ballot box budgeting. He feels people aren’t getting the whole story because they are not reading mainstream news anymore. Commentary news shows, internet and radio all provide a biased viewpoint. They are meant to give one side or the other and people listen to what they want to hear.

PTA needs to be loud and strong and make a lot of noise. If a tax increase should get on the ballot PTA will need to get behind it. Unless taxes are increased we will be in deep “do-do”. The state tax system needs to be restructured and we are experiencing the unintended consequences of Prop 13.
Tuesday Feb. 8th 2011

Michael Cohen - Chief Deputy Director, Department of Finance  
Mac Taylor - Legislative Analyst (LAO)  
Jean Ross - Executive Director, California Budget Project

Report by: Jacqueline Guzzetta  
Advocacy Chair, Irvine Council

Michael Cohen - Chief Deputy Director, Department of Finance
(Mr. Cohen took Ana Matosantos’s place at the last minute as she was called away by the Governor)

Primary responsibility is preparing the budget. Worked in the Legislative Analyst Office for 13 years. Talked about what the Governor’s budget looks like.

Problem
First of all, if nothing is done, we have a 25.4 billion dollar shortfall. Each year after, we have a 25 billion dollar shortfall. In the past, we have adopted temporary solutions that leave us scrambling when the year ends. Proposition 98 offered ongoing solutions – but it has issues too. The governor didn’t want to do the same thing that’s been done recently (using temporary solutions). He wanted a solution that would provide a little more stability for the state.

Governor’s Budget Proposal: Gov. Brown tried to take a balanced approach that includes revenue increases ($12 billion), budget cuts ($12.5 billion) and “other solutions” (borrowing strategies - $1.9 billion) for a total of $26.4 billion in solutions.

Proposal Includes:
- Extending tax increases (set to end July 1st 2011) for five more years, which would hopefully allow the state enough time to economically recuperate.
- Defer education funds that were to be paid back this year (2011), to 2013. Net = $2 Billion
- 750 million reduction in health and human services
- 400 million reduction in community college budgets
- 11-12 million reduction in subsidized childcare. This will result in a subsidy amount for the families who remain eligible for state subsidized childcare.
- Shifting public safety programs to county level
- Adult protective programs back to county
- Child welfare programs back to county
- Discontinue redevelopment programs (originally allowed profit from property taxes to address urban blight issues within communities). They currently cost the state $2 Billion. They will be phased out. After 1st year re-development services will be re-dedicated to local services

Education is a major component of the Governor’s Budget.

Q&A
Q: Jessica from SF – Is there any way to divorce schools from ballot realignment.
A: The goal is to keep the ballot simple. In the past there have been way too many ballot measures.
Q: Noreen from Santa Barbara – When redevelopment shifted back to Sacramento I thought that prop 22 guaranteed that money could not be taken out of redevelopment funds.
A: Prop 22 presumes that redevelopment exists. They get around prop 22 by ending redevelopment altogether.
Q: Jane from SD – Problem for the school district is to find funding, but we do that with local partnerships/government agencies. We understand that tough decisions needed to be made, but have a concern with the 5 year funding.
A: Guarantee counties will continue to get dollars in five years hoping that the economy is better if not have to re-address the problem. Possibly need to do it again.

Mac Taylor - Legislative Analyst (LAO)
The LAO feels that the governor’s budget proposal which came on January 10th is a “good start”.

For details - check out: www.lao.ca.gov

LAO’s Assessment of the Budget proposal:

- It’s a very serious proposal (an honest effort)
- Education was spared any additional cuts (in light of recent years)
- Looks at other revenue sources
- Includes some borrowing
- Includes a fee increase at colleges
- Tries to address a long term problem

The budget problem keeps coming back because we keep fixing it with ONE-TIME solutions. The Governor is trying to address this problem.
Childcare took a $750 million hit - which is huge.
Realigns state services to the county
Ends redevelopment
Ending “Enterprise Zones” (tax credits for hiring disadvantaged/low income employees.)
The Governor is asking the legislature to adopt the budget by March 1st which is not going to be easy. It’s a very complicated process.
Taylor feels deferrals are a bad way to manage the budget and that we need to do away with them. They require that money is spent NOW but paid at a deferred date (the following year). This is problematic for many reasons.

Q&A
Q: 9th District – SD – Deferral problem. Schools spend now, but don’t have the money. Thus, they borrow from banks who charge interest. But…they don’t get reimbursed for interest. How are we supposed to function that way when we are increasingly going into debt?
A: That’s correct. We will not pay interest…and we shouldn’t pay interest. We should DO AWAY with deferrals altogether.
Q: Jason-SD – Is this just political posturing or does the redevelopment component really change things?
A: No, it doesn’t, there is funding buried in underlying programs at the same $$ level. This is a fair part.
Q: Nancy 32nd. Contra Costa – Prop 98. Is prop 98 a useful way to have education funded?
A: No it’s a bad way to do so. We shouldn’t have education hitched to the general fund which is volatile.
Q: Irwin – 6th district – How do we create stability? Is attaching to property taxes better because it’s less volatile?
A: Hard to say. It could be. Or, we could change the rate structure.

Jean Ross - Executive director, California Budget Project
The Pace at which things are moving is amazing!

Budget Pros
- Will buy some breathing room. If it’s implemented with the tax extensions, there will be a 4-5 year window in which the budget is in balance.
- It provides a relatively balanced approach (i.e. equally uses cuts to spending, an increase in revenue and some borrowing).
- Package is politically smart (i.e. hits high and low income families)
- There is an enterprising piece, corporate tax pieces = $2 Billion (this will be a tough pass)
- Phases out redevelopment agencies (this will be a tough pass)

Budget Cons
- Changes in CalWORKS /a reduction by 20% in the “Welfare to Work” program. This places a lots of kids at risk of becoming homeless, and thus a higher likelihood of not graduating.
- Places hard caps on doctor visits which affects people on disability, etc.

Check out www.cbp.org

Q&A
Q: Heidi – 31st - If voters approve tax extension is it not simply prolonging the pain, etc.
A: Yes, but it gives us a window for breathing space. If counties only see the dollars with a five-year guarantee, they won’t make really, really significant changes. Thus, I think it’s important to point out that the large part of these budget solutions are permanent. Yes, it’s like kicking a can five years down the road but at least its not six months. It’s not perfect, but it is an improvement over what we currently have and is based on the premise that the economy should be in much better shape in five years.

Q: Jay San Diego - question regarding corporate tax increases. The public perception is that CA is horrible and we are driving business owners out of the state. Is there any way to restructure corporate taxes to address the LONG-term problem?

A: We are not a high TAX state. We are a high tax RATE state. The governor did change the formula for corporate taxes. It lets businesses use them the way they want. It proposes to make the “all sales formula” mandatory. Businesses are NOT leaving CA. That’s an urban legend. “Data is not the plural of anecdote.”

Q: Budget cuts = job cuts which ultimately taxes social services and health services. Has the budget process done any analysis of “down the line” impact? i.e. what the effects of the new budget proposal will be?

A: That’s a good question. You need to look at the impact.

Key Issues Overview II: School Reform - A Legislative Perspective

Senator Loni Hancock, Senator Alan Lowenthal and Senator Joe Simitian

Report by: Thasa Zuziak
Advocacy Chair, Laguna Beach Council

Senator Alan Lowenthal
27th Senate District. Chair of the Senate Committee on Education and is Vice-Chair of the Senate Committee on Legislative Ethics.

- He has ONE over arching goal: to protect public education (financially)
- We need to speak for the children of California with one voice.
- We have great challenges and great opportunities. There is a tremendous need for reform and change in education so our children can compete in a global economy. This is not a time to find scapegoats or point fingers, rather it is time to enlist the aid of everyone to make positive changes.
- We need a greater emphasis on linking schools to outcome such as jobs. What skills are necessary to achieve and be productive in the 21st century and are we achieving this in our education system now. We need sustainable change.
- Wants to provide greater flexibility to school districts.

Senator Lori Hancock
9th district, Contra Costa, Alameda. Chaired Assembly Select Committee on Bridging the Achievement Gap. Currently on the Senate Education Committee

- Priority for her is bridging the achievement gap between schools, committed to public education.
- Adequacies study shows many more billions of dollars need to be added to the education budget if we want every child to achieve at our high standards and expectations.
- State is at a turning point
- Good news: things are really different in Sacramento right now. We have a governor who is facing up to a $25 billion deficit. The realization that the taxes we collect every year will not fund what we are committed to and hard choices will need to be made instead of one time fixes or gimmicks year after year.
- Also good news: Prop 25 passed and so the legislature can now allocate $$ with a majority vote instead of 2/3. Bad news, the state doesn’t have any money and 2/3 vote is still needed to raise revenues.
- More good news: education funding basically remains flat in the new governors January budget proposal…assuming that the tax extensions pass
- Bad News: $12.5 billion in cuts proposed by the governor are HORRIBLE – especially for Higher Education and Health & Human Services.
- What we need to do. Push our representatives to put the tax extensions on the June special election ballot or another $12.5 billion will need to be cut.
• If we can pass the tax extensions we can focus on balancing the budget and rebuilding instead of being in crisis mode. If there are no tax extensions and we have to cut another $12.5 billion, not only will we not recognize education, we won’t recognize the entire state of California.
• PTA can help us get to where we need to be – we have great Advocates and now is the time to act.

Senator Joe Simitian
Parts of San Mateo, Santa Cruz and Santa Clara. Chairs the Environmental Quality Committee, member of the Education Committee, Budget and Fiscal Review and many more committees.
• Has introduced bill SCA 5 (Simitian) to amend the constitution to lower the voter threshold from 2/3 to 55% for school districts, county offices of education and community college districts to levy parcel taxes. This bill needs a 2/3 vote of the legislature to go on the ballot.
• The budget crisis in Sacramento is making it hard to get attention for anything else at the Capital. There is a lot of important work to be done but everything is focused on the financial crisis.
• He also authored SB 1381 Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 that became law last year. The bill will phase in a change of date of when kids can start kindergarten over a three year time frame, starting in Sept 2012. It will put us in line with almost the rest of the country to have our children be 5 as of Sept. 1st to enter kindergarten.
• We have too little money to get stuff done for the kids that we have now.
• Wants a data system to give hard research and outcomes on how effective programs are that we implement in school. An example was given regarding the 20-1 class size and wants to know just how effective it is.
• If we can’t show the public we are spending our money in a responsible manner we will never get their support to add funding for education.
• His ideal Data system would show Pre-K to Job placement after college and just how effective our programs and schools are.
• Likes the idea of giving more control to the local level but also admits the state is really good at giving local control at the times when the state has no money but when it does have money not quite so open to it. At times of no money the state likes the local control to have to make the hard decisions. The state does have an obligation to look after fundamental rights such as, Special Ed and civil rights. That is not something that should go down to the local.
• More needs to be done on equalization dollars but it is a lot tougher to do in bad budget times.
• He is totally open to taking a look at a different approach to school funding and finding a more stable and equitable way.

Navigating the Capitol

Kevin Gordon - President, School Innovations & Advocacy
Rick Simpson - Deputy Chief of Staff to Assembly Speaker John Pérez
Debbie Look - California State PTA Director of Legislation

Report by: Tammy Metzger
Vice President for Advocacy and Membership, McGaugh Elementary School

Kevin Gordon
There is “perpetual uncertainty in education” due to school funding from the general fund, which fluctuates with the economy.

It’s important for the public to know that there have been $9 billion in deferrals, so schools are not really untouched this year, that there were no cuts. There are $2 billion in proposed deferrals this year and there have been another $7 billion since the 2003-04 budget.

It’s a “huge leap of faith” if you believe continuing the current taxes will be a ballot measure.
“75% of voters say don’t cut school budgets any more.”

PTA has a “meaningful role in illustrating what that stakes are.”

We can’t afford to give anyone tax breaks or increase other taxes. We’re broke. We need to continue with the current tax schedule. It’s a viable way out.
Gordon said he wished Governor Brown had said “this budget is all about education.” Over the last 5 years education has been disproportionately cut.

We face “unavoidable cuts of $300 to $400” per student per year if the current tax structure is not put on the ballot and approved.
If cuts exceed $2 billion we will have to close schools.

**Rick Simpson**
Tips on how to be a better advocate with legislators, in Sacramento and in their home districts.

The Six P’s

1. Policy – Know your issue and how it interacts with other bills and laws. Has it been proposed in the past? What happened and why? There are few truly new ideas, so it probably has already been proposed. Be prepared to explain why did it not pass and why the conditions today are different. Anticipate the other side’s arguments and have counter-arguments. **Know the fiscal ramifications.**

2. Process – The legislature operates on a fairly strict calendar, so target your advocacy activity. 70-80% of bills are introduced 1 week before the deadline, which is February 18th this year. Bills are not heard in policy committee for 31 days, which gives you time to research them and articulate a position. Then the bill goes to the fiscal committee, if monetary impacts. The bill is usually back on the floor in early June, in the other house, where the process repeats for several months. Check the legislative calendar schedule to know subject matter, when and to who letters should be written. The last day to introduce a bill this year is February 18th. May 6th is the last day for policy committees to hear and report to fiscal committees.

3. Politics – The Capitol is a political institution. Understand where they are coming from and tailor your message to what they are most open to considering.

4. People – There are 120 people in the legislature and this is a human process. Understand their background and know your audience so you can tailor your message. For example, Assemblyman Jim Silva’s wife was a special education teacher, so you might want to discuss the effects your issue will have on special education. Were they a former school board member? Are they related to anybody else politically?

5. Patience – The legislature doesn’t do things quickly, which can be frustrating but overall it’s probably OK. It usually takes 1 to 4 years for something to happen in the legislature. For example, lowering the threshold from 2/3 to 50% for school facilities bonds took 13 years to pass! It took 6 years to even get it to the ballot and then and it failed twice (1993 & 1996) before finally passing in 2000. However, it was worth the wait as it transformed school facilities. So, be patient as circumstances and alliances change, which may lead to a bill’s eventual passage.

6. Politeness – Members get a lot of negatives, so remember to say “thank you” when legislators and/or their staff meet with you, vote on an issue you support, send you a letter, etc.

**Debbie Look, California State PTA Director of Legislation**
Legislators are often in their home districts on Fridays, so schedule a visit then. Bring your PTA, community members, students, etc. You can stop by just to say “hello” and tell them what you care about and what is going on in your school.
**7th “P” to Simpson’s Tips – Personalize the Message.** Your legislators have data, so add your life. Have children write letters about their aspirations, what they are losing with budget cuts. Explain the local effect. Then carry the message back to your PTA.
We need 2+ Republicans in the Senate and 2+ Republicans in the Assembly to get the tax issue on the June ballot. Tell them that 66% of voters want a role in deciding the budget issue and that there are consequences of not acting.

Panel Discussion followed
Simpson: Referencing the 2007 Getting Down to Facts report which synthesized research relating to school finance and governance, he said “Some members were shocked that 20% of schools will always be in the last 2 deciles.” (laughter)

Simpson: There is an image that schools are not doing well and it’s just not true; the bad schools are gone. Bad image due to spin from Schools Suck, Inc. (laughter)

Simpson: “Political debate is high stakes. Talk radio and blogs need to tone it down so it’s not so polarized.”

Gordon: there should be more moderate politicians with the 2011 redistricting.

Simpson: There are 2 views on how to present the budget crisis to people. On the one hand you can let people see the death and destruction, versus another approach that understands that voters resent you putting a gun to their head. People expect the legislators to solve the problems, which is Assembly Speaker Pérez’s view. Also, if you warn about death and destruction and people don’t vote for the tax extension, then you don’t want to be forced to make threatened cuts because there are other options, like borrowing.

Gordon: Raising awareness is a “really important role for the PTA."

Notable Quotes from our two days!
By Celia Jaffe – 4th District PTA Executive Vice President
Huntington Beach

Cecelia Mansfield - State PTA Budget Advocate
"This year we've had to hit the ground running."
"We're pleased that the governor has taken a balanced approach which is what we've been advocating for years."

Ted Lempert, Children Now
"Are we serious about equal opportunity in this country?"

"Why is having an outstanding education system and outstanding healthcare...for all kids so difficult?"

"The people of California support this [education and services for children] more than they support other things the government does."

Sherry Griffiths-ACSA
"We really need to look at student growth and see what schools need intervention. Not the [current] sledgehammer approach."

"Our local teachers and leaders know best...with accountability, of course."

Patricia Rucker--State Board of Ed
“Public Education is a public good and not a public commodity.”

George Skelton
About the partisan divide in Sacramento: “Well, I think there’s hope with redistricting. There ought to be...I’m betting that there will be more moderation.”
"I always thought the constitutional convention was a lousy idea."

Governor & legislature ought to raise taxes directly, "not go back to the people like Jerry says. The more I think of it the dumber I think it is."

When the May 2009 tax extension failed, "I knew we were going to be in deep, deep doo doo, and we are."

On the balance between state and local governance: "It's been 32 years since Prop 13 and things are out of kilter still."

Prop 13..."made local governments serfs of the state."

About what we can do: "Parents have to get active and demonstrate."

About pension reform: "People are envious. Public employees are getting a defined benefit pension plan and they're not, and they're paying for it."

**Michael Cohen, D.O.F.**

"How we solve the budget problems - it's really a balanced approach: 12.5 in cuts and 12.5 in revenues."

"If we do nothing, Prop 98 would fall on the natural."

**Mac Taylor, LAO**

About the governor's budget: "It is a serious proposal because it tries to address our long term problem."

"He's put some very bold ideas on the table."

If the tax extensions fail, Prop 98 will take cuts past the formula--"it's almost a mathematical given."

On ever increasing education funding deferrals: "It's a little bit like crack cocaine. It's hard to get off it once you start doing it."

Whether Prop 98 is a blessing to education or not: "I could argue that you've done worse because of Prop 98."

**Jean Ross, CBP**

On Gov. Brown's acceleration of consideration of the budget: "Every year is new. Every year has something different. The pace this year is extraordinary."

"The best thing you can say about the governor's budget is that it will supply some breathing room."

On reductions in health and social services: "There are serious cuts proposed where people will die."

The Governor's June ballot plan: "This is a high risk strategy. If voters say no, legislators will see it as open season."

"As opposed to the last so-many years, instead of being pushed six months down the road, the can is being kicked six years down the road."

"Businesses are not leaving California. That is an urban myth that never dies."

On people "proving" their point by telling a story: "Data is not the plural of anecdote."

**Sen Alan Lowenthal**

"We all need to work together for sustainable change."

"One overarching goal: To protect public education."
**Senator Loni Hancock**
"I believe the state is at a turning point."

[We need to] put our money where our aspirations are."

To PTA's contribution to improving the state: "You are the people who can make it happen."

Proposed cuts in health and human services: "Terrible cuts that are going to cause great human suffering."

"[If the tax extensions don't pass] we will not recognize not only public education but also the state of California."

**Sen. Joe Simitian**
On reforming education: "It's a little hard to redesign the boat while you're bailing water."

"The current system of education funding is the Winchester Mystery House of funding."

**Kevin Gordon, SIA**
About anticipated education funding for 2010-2011: "There is perpetual uncertainty in education funding."

If tax extensions fail in June: "So if 12-14 billion dollars fall off the table in June, where do they go [for more cuts]? Education!"

**Rick Simpson**
"Legislatures were not made to do things quickly...and that's not a bad thing."

"The bigger the issue, the more patient you need to be."