

## **March 18, 2009 – Trip to Sacramento – Executive Summary**

### **Five Attendees**

Kathy Fischer, CUCPTSA State Legislative Co-chair & Aliso Niguel High PTSA  
Alli Maier, John Malcom Elementary PTA & Marco Forster Middle School PTSA  
Sabrina Medrano-Erb, San Juan Elementary PTA & Las Flores Middle School PTSA  
Erin Kutnick, San Juan Hills High School PTSA  
Maryanne Rose, Crown Valley Elementary PTA & Aliso Niguel High PTSA

### **Six Meetings were held**

Christopher Finarelli, Ed Consultant to Senator Bob Huff (R), 29<sup>th</sup> District  
Megan Moret, Legislative Aide to Senator Alex Padilla (D), 20<sup>th</sup> District  
Paul Navarro, Deputy Legislative Secretary to Gov. Schwarzenegger  
Dinora Ramirez, Capitol Director to Senator Abel Maldonado (R), 15<sup>th</sup> District  
Brett Dietz, Ed Consultant to Assemblymember Brian Nestande (R), 64<sup>th</sup> District  
Rick Simpson, Deputy Chief of Staff to Assembly Speaker Karen Bass

**Highlights:** Each of our meetings included a great dealing of information exchange about CUSD (on our part) and about the budget and pending legislation (on the part of the legislative staffers). It was an excellent day of meetings.

- ✓ We presented the challenges of the planned budget cuts to CUSD for 2009-10 & 2010-11 along with leaving information summarizing cuts over the last three years. Legislators are concerned and sympathetic about budget difficulties.
- ✓ We solicited legislator feedback on several bills and learned about some additional pending legislation including...
  - SCA 6 (Simitian) Lowering of parcel tax threshold to 55%. Republicans do not want to lower the threshold for increasing taxes.
  - AB 8 (Brownley) Education Reform Study Group. Legislators like the idea of this bill, but without additional funding reforms are difficult.
  - SB 19 (Simitian) Education Data. This bill is yet to be heard in the Ed Committee
  - SB 492 (Maldonado) Safe Zones Around Schools. To protect students from gang members loitering near campuses.
  - SBA 266 (Huff) Statewide Open Enrollment in Schools. This bill would allow students easier access to schools outside their district boundaries.
- ✓ We learned about the breakdown of the Federal Stimulus dollars coming to California public schools. Money is expected to be dispersed in April.
- ✓ Paul Navarro reviewed the less stringent penalties now associated with K-3 CSR which are very straightforward and no more than 30% reduction (as opposed to 100% loss) in funding for increased enrollment over 20 students per class. He reinforced that the governor and Republicans foresee the increased categorical flexibility in various programs as being positive for school districts.
- ✓ Paul also discussed the projected shortfall of \$8 billion under the new budget. More will be known after tax returns have come in and the May election has been held.

Christopher Finarelli, Ed Consultant to  
Senator Bob Huff (R), 29<sup>th</sup> District  
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Education

Kathy Fischer led the meeting.

We first introduced ourselves and our district to Chris. Explained who we are and what we do.

We asked about the potential \$8 Billion shortfall. We were told the Senator did not support the budget package and that he felt imposing taxes would not help us see revenue increases.

Senator Huff was happy with the flexibility for education in the budget and would like to see more.

He is interested in education finance reform since currently with it guaranteed as 40% of the budget, education funding is always on the table. He does not think we necessarily need more money but systematic reforms. Stated we are falling way behind other states.

We told Chris that we are a low wealth district and we have approximately 51,000 students.

We asked about the Stimulus money and were told the Senator supports local control.

We asked for the Senator's opinion on SCA 6 and were told they were not familiar with it but on first glance he would probably oppose it. Chris mentioned we are the highest taxed state in the country and the taxes are not rendering the intended results.

Senator Huff is currently working on a bill that would allow open enrollment to other neighboring districts to give parents more options. We raised some issues about how that program could possibly be abused and how it might not help the "failing" school. The bill is SB 266.

Submitted by Erin Kutnick

Megan Moret, Legislative Aide to  
Senator Alex Padilla (D), 20<sup>th</sup> District  
Member, Senate Committee on Education

Alli Maier led the meeting.

Alli voiced our admiration of Senator Padilla as a “champion of education” with whom we want to build a relationship. As a product of California’s public schools, he is a role model for the Hispanic community, and we would love to have him speak to our Hispanic community in our efforts to better involve that community. We want our Hispanic community to feel a part of our efforts to provide a good education for ALL of our children.

Ms. Moret will approach the Senator about such an opportunity, but pointed out that due to the senator’s busy schedule, he most likely would not be able to make it a priority at this time. She suggested we approach Lou Correa or Gloria Molina. She suggested that we find a child with a connection to Molina’s district and have that child write a letter to Ms. Molina.

-Senator Padilla is co-author of SB160, a bill that would allow college financial aid for illegal immigrants.

-AB8 (Brownley) The Educational Reform Educational Reform Working Group Bill: Ms Moret does not foresee him opposing this bill.

-SB19 (Simitian) Educational Data: He has not been approached regarding this bill

-SCA6 The Parcel Tax Act: (Simitian) 55% majority to pass a parcel tax. Padilla is unlikely to oppose this as he likes the simple majority.

Ms. Moret advised us that the Senator would appreciate our support of SB552 which is funded by and sponsored by Donate For Life. This bill would place organ transplant education into high school biology classes. We advised her that State PTA would have to take a stand but it is very possible that they would do so.

Submitted by Maryanne Rose

Dinora Ramirez, Capitol Director to  
Senator Abel Maldonado (R), 15<sup>th</sup> District  
Member, Senate Committee on Education

Erin Kutnik led the meeting. She began speaking about budget cuts and gave CUCPTSA hand-outs to Ms. Ramirez.

Senators stand on certain positions. On that note we wanted to thank Senator Maldonado for on voting for the budget & fighting for a more fair & balanced budget. We understand that this was a difficult decision.

Dinora stated that Senator Maldonado always made difficult decisions based on the greater good since his days in the assembly. He was hearing constantly during those days from Superintendents that they needed to have a budget.

Looking at June vs. May revise. The numbers will be coming in and May election will have taken place. The Legislature may be back in session in June with budget issues all over again. Districts have received an e-mail from Department of Education asking not to spend the federal stimulus money because it is still not certain what is coming for sure from the federal government.

We asked what do you believe is really going to come to come to Districts? Dinora said they know money is coming they just don't know when or how. Not all details have been worked out as to how money is going to be dispersed.

What about flexibility? NCLB standards are high.

Education reforms? What is Senator Maldonado working on? Nothing coming through that would require money for legislation. If there is anything with money attached it probably will not go through.

ADA counting reform should be reviewed. Possibly streamline formulas.

Dinora asked about our district - Who will be let go? Not everyone? No, by law the teachers already received their notices. Classified staff will receive them in May. For us, the issue is there has also been an increase in enrollment as well at CUSD.

Alli asked if Senator Maldonado speaks to families or attends speaking engagements? Yes, contact San Luis Obispo office.

Dinora mentioned Sen. Maldonado's bill -- SB492 -- Safe Zone Around Schools. Brooke from the Senator's office will email Sabrina the "rough draft" language on the bill. The bill is possibly being heard in committee on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

Submitted by Sabrina Medrano-Erb

Brett Dietz, Ed Consultant to  
Assemblymember Brian Nestande (R), 64<sup>th</sup> District  
Vice Chair, Assembly Committee on Education

Kathy Fischer led the meeting.

“Its death by 1,000 blows here in the legislature”

- ❖ In the education community, they are talking about where the federal stimulus money is going.
- ❖ \$8 billion is coming from the federal gov't. to backfill education cuts.
- ❖ The biggest discussion is that some want to expand programs but what we don't want is to build a bigger cliff to fall off. This is 1-time money only. Obama even said don't add any new programs.
- ❖ None of the following are continual appropriations:
  - ^ \$1.1 billion going to Title 1
  - ^ \$388 million going toward school improvement/school facilities grants
  - ^ \$70 million to Career Tech
  - ^ \$1.2 billion to IDEA – this will hold us for about 2-3 years
  - ^ Fiscal Stabilization Fund - \$4.8 billion – which is the majority of the backfill money. This is the big discretionary pot for K-12.
  - ^ \$18 million going to the McKinley-Vento Homeless Program
  - ^ There are two Competitive Grants – first there's \$250 million allocated for a State Longitudinal Data System. Secondly, there's \$200 million set aside for Teacher Incentive Grants. Note: these are the nationwide dollar amounts.
  - ^ \$12.8 million to the Child Nutritional Program
  - ^ \$220 million to a Child Care Development Block Grant
  - ^ TOTAL = \$7.7 billion
- ❖ Assemblyman Nestande agrees that there are specific needs that must be addressed, such as: Special Ed funding, Testing standards, the CAHSEE needs to be adjusted, the A-G criteria standards need to be set high, but it also needs to be a direct approach and the acknowledgment that not everybody will go to college, Direct partnerships need to be established with the Junior Colleges and Charter Schools for Career Tech (CT) opportunities. We need skilled technicians for the coming environmental projects of the future as well as closing the Achievement Gap. Not surprisingly, AB 32 – which seeks to implement environmental regulations – is huge right now.
- ❖ The State wants us to wean off the multi-year philosophy and transition into the year-to-year.
- ❖ Brian Nestande would like to slow down the rush to construct and pass bills (the average per assembly member is around 40 bills in 2 years). We need slow but steps that are more significant. This is a direct repercussion of Term Limits (2 years for assembly members). We rush and do business too quickly here.

Submitted by Alli Maier

Rick Simpson, Deputy Chief of Staff to  
Assembly Speaker Karen Bass

Alli Maier led our last meeting of the day with Rick Simpson. He gave us some feedback related to the meetings we had during the day and other topics of interest to us.

- SB 266 – Senator Huff’s bill on statewide open enrollment. Rick does not feel the bill will be passed.
- Brian Nestande – he is the son of former assemblyman Bruce Nestande who served in the 1970’s from Orange County.
- AB 8 – Assemblymember Julia Brownley’s bill on Education Reform. Rick says there are lots of ideas on Ed reform, many from the Getting Down to Facts Studies. California is underinvested in education.
- The GDTF studies suggest that education should receive 40% more money than currently received. Rick would like to see a return to local finance options such as parcel taxes.
- The legislature controls public education because the “next dollar comes from the state”.
- Lobbying efforts would move from the state level to the local level if the dollars funding education come from local sources.
- Since the passage of Proposition 13, control of school district funding moved from the local districts to the state which provides money for most of the 1,000 districts in the state.
- Federal stimulus dollars – ARRA (American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009) will come to the schools despite reports we may be hearing to the contrary. Rick is confident that the IDEA and Title 1 money will go out quickly and directly to districts. Rick had just had a meeting with the governor’s office staff, Department of Finance, and the Senate Education consultant to discuss ARRA.
- The fiscal stabilization dollars from ARRA will be distributed in proportion to cuts experienced in the districts. Those experiencing greater cuts from the state will get more federal dollars to compensate.
- We should expect the federal dollars by mid April.
- What about the \$8 billion budget gap? Since the state has a signed budget for 2009/10, there is no deadline for action on the budget gap. However, it will probably be looked at in June.
- May Election. Rick gave us some information explaining the propositions, especially Prop 1A. (see attachment). He thinks the six propositions will pass. There is a variety of opinion in terms of supporting and opposing the propositions.
- The California League of Women Voters, Jean Ross of the California Budget Project, and the Jarvis Taxpayers Association are opposed to Prop 1A. Jean Ross of CBP has concerns about the spending cap while the Jarvis group opposes the additional taxes.

Submitted by Kathy Fischer