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**CUCPTSA LEGISLATION/ADVOCACY TEAM
January 2021 Report**

In Local News:

At the December 2020 Board Meeting our two newest Trustees were sworn in, Pamela Braunstein and Lisa Davis. We are fortunate they are able to join us on Friday, January 8th so we can better get to know them.

The Board voted to adopt the Cultural Proficiency Plan as presented at the December 2020 Board Meeting. There were significant changes to the plan adopted in December, and the one presented at the workshop in November. We are fortunate to have a presentation of this Plan at our January Legislation/Advocacy Meeting.

The Board also voted to change the Temporary Grading Policy for Physical Education for Middle and High School students. The changes made are retro-active back to first quarter with letter grades changed to Credit/No Credit. Many students and families were caught unaware of this policy change until the last day of the semester/grading period. As a result, there was quite an uproar. This policy is being brought back by Trustee request to the January 20, 2021, Board Meeting. If this is an issue you or members of your school community feel passionate about, please encourage them to reach out directly to Trustees via email and also to read and "pull a blue card"/register to speak at the next Board Meeting on this topic. It is through outreach by families that this policy is even being brought back to the Board in January. Advocacy works, and it is through our voices that changes can be made.

In our advocacy work, we continue to highlight the needs of all students, no matter what program, when talking with District administration, Board of Trustee members, state and federal elected representatives. There are common needs for all our students – access to education; appropriate funding for their schools; access to technology and the necessary infrastructure to promote and support computer-based learning; universal feeding for all students so no one ever goes hungry while trying to learn.

As you read the report, things are changing fast and I compile this report starting the day the last one was sent to the day I send the next report. So, I am including the dates articles are written, so you can see what has changed, but also look for ideas and how they evolved over a period of a month.

A couple of websites that I am tracking at the moment are:

For COVID-19 cases in Orange County:

<https://occovid19.ochealthinfo.com/coronavirus-in-oc>

California Blueprint for a Safer Economy:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/> This site updates every Tuesday with new data and updated county color coding.

Orange County COVID-19 Dashboard:

<https://ochca.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opstdashboard/index.html#/cc4859c8c522496b9f21c451de2fedae> where you can track daily reported cases, deaths, cumulative numbers and other statistics specific to Orange County.

Agendas from the most recent Board of Trustee meetings can be found here:

November 18, 2020 – Board Meeting - <https://capousd-ca.schoolloop.com/file/1514016268888/1531973256666/3191114534131122296.pdf>

November 4, 2020 – Board Workshop - <https://capousd-ca.schoolloop.com/file/1514016268888/1531973256666/4184160112065181941.pdf>
(Agenda only - exhibits not available at time of writing.)

Minutes and Audio Recordings of Meetings can be found at https://capousd-ca.schoolloop.com/pf4/cms2/view_page?d=x&group_id=1514016268888&vdid=wi10b1qsopu12s. Minutes are listed once approved, audio is typically posted within a day or two of the meeting. Also, on this page are links to 2018-2019 minutes/agendas/audio and previous years.

CUCPTSA Legislation/Advocacy Racial Equity Book Club –

We have formed our own Racial Equity Book Club – we will provide summaries of what we learned from each book read. Other updates from the book club will be included here as well.

From Fourth District PTA:

SACRAMENTO SAFARI – Save the Dates – February 22-26, 2021

Sacramento Safari is being held virtually this year with workshops on Monday – Thursday, and meetings with legislators on Friday, February 26, 2021. More news to come on this exciting event. As of right now we do not know what the cost will be – so please keep Sacramento Safari in your budgets, you do not need to release funds until closer to the event. HOWEVER, it should be much more affordable than in the past since we are not paying for airfares, hotels, or meals. Sacramento Safari is open to ALL PTA members, not just leg reps. This will be a great year to expose additional PTA members to what happens during this important annual advocacy trip and hopefully build upon this year for the future.

Talking Points for Legislative Chairs, December 2020

Details are in the December issue of the *Advocacy Communicator*.



- The California economy is doing better than anticipated and the Legislative Analyst's Office predicts that the state will receive \$26 billion more in tax revenues than expected, give or take \$10 billion. That would be good news, but our schools still need more federal funding to help them deal with the impacts of the pandemic. The Communicator has a link so that we can easily contact our U.S. senators and representatives and ask them to approve pandemic relief funding.
- Sacramento Safari will be virtual this year, making it easy for all of us to attend. There will be a sneak peek on February 5 from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Safari sessions will be held the morning of February 22 and in the afternoon on February 23.
- We all need to sign up for action alerts from Fourth District PTA and California State PTA, so we can contact state legislators when it's important to support or oppose a bill. The link to do that and a link to find out the names and contact information for your state legislators are in the newsletter.
- California State PTA's Legislation Conference will also be virtual. It will be held on February 8 and 9, and costs \$50 (which should be reimbursed by your PTA). The link to get more information and register is in the newsletter.
- The tobacco industry succeeded in collecting a million signatures to stop a new state law that bans the sale of flavored tobacco products to children and adults. California State PTA worked very hard to get this law passed. If the secretary of state approves the signatures, the law will be delayed until the November 2022 election, when voters will decide whether to keep or reject the law.
- The Communicator lists Orange County election results for state senate and state assembly positions.

Back issues of the Communicator can be found at:

<http://www.fourthdistrictpta.org/advocacy-communicator/>

CA PTA Monthly Advocacy Calls:

Join California State PTA Director of Legislation Shereen Walter and members of the Legislation Team on Wednesdays.

Here is the schedule of upcoming advocacy webinars through June 2021. The webinars generally take place the first Wednesday of every month, from 7:00-8:00 p.m. (with some exceptions):

- January 6, 2021
- Feb. 3, 2021
- March 3, 2021
- April 7, 2021
- May 5, 2021
- June 2, 2021



To register for any or all of these webinars, click here:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/31940121174953740>

California PTA News:

California State PTA is excited to announce that we will be holding an **all-virtual** Legislation Conference on **February 8-9, 2021**. We hope you will join us for this new and exciting format!

During the conference, whose theme is "**A Path to Equity**," you'll hear from legislators and other leaders from around the state on matters that are important to the children and families of California. There will also be a strong focus on how to schedule, plan and execute a meeting with your legislators.

The cost will be \$50. Registration information is coming soon ♦ keep an eye on your email, the California State PTA website - <https://capta.org/programs-events/legislation-conference/> , and our social media accounts!

In State News:

School 'wellness centers' could be an answer to soaring mental health needs in California: Schools should join with health agencies and nonprofits to provide mental and physical health services for families, commission says. By Carolyn Jones – December 9, 2020 – Responding to a surge in student anxiety and depression – exacerbated by the pandemic – a state commission has called for California schools to move quickly to become “wellness centers” addressing mental and physical health needs among K-12 students and their families. Through agreements with nonprofits and government health agencies, schools would offer psychological services, basic medical care and other services to help families navigate trauma and other challenges, according to a recently released report by the state Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission. Read the complete article at: [School 'wellness centers' could be an answer to soaring mental health needs in California | EdSource](#) In CUSD we are lucky to have Wellness Centers at several of our high schools to help with our student mental health needs, however, more is still needed.

Teachers and school staff in California increasingly likely to get vaccine in next round – By Diana Lambert – December 22, 2020 – After frontline medical workers and residents of long-term care facilities receive vaccines, a consensus is emerging among health experts advising officials in California and nationally that teachers and other school staff be high on the priority list to be vaccinated next. Read the complete article at: [Teachers and school staff in California increasingly likely to get vaccine in next round | EdSource](#)

Newsom offers \$2 billion plan to bring back in-person instruction in elementary grades– By John Fensterwald and Louis Freedberg – December 30, 2020- Gov. Gavin Newsom presented a \$2 billion proposal for financial incentives Wednesday to prod school districts to bring back elementary school students for in-person



instruction, starting in mid-February. ... School districts would receive extra funding – from \$450 to about \$700 per student – if they agreed to a timetable for reopening schools, a rigorous regimen of testing both students and staff for the virus, and a strict health and safety plan that teachers and employee unions would have to consent to. Newsom said more details would be available with the state budget next week. ... Districts would receive a minimum of \$450 for every student in the district, plus additional money per student based on the Local Control Funding Formula. It provides extra money for English learners, homeless, foster and low-income students. Read the complete article at: [Newsom offers \\$2 billion plan to bring back in-person instruction in elementary grades | EdSource](#) Hint – Capistrano stands to gain \$450 per student since we have re-opened to in-person instruction. School districts that reopened earlier this school year also qualify for these payments, it is not just districts that waited till February to reopen. The \$2 billion would fall under Prop 98 funding – so it needs to be considered in how it affects total school funding, since it seems to be moving funding from one line to the next all within Prop 98. It will be interesting to see how this falls out within the proposed budget that is due out in early January 2021.

California teachers’ unions affirm opposition to opening schools without more safety precautions – By Louis Freedberg – December 18, 2020 – As the pandemic continues to spread in a seemingly uncontrolled fashion, California’s leading teachers’ unions have affirmed their opposition to school openings without significantly more safety precautions, furthering complicating hopes for bringing more students back to school for in-person instruction. However, the California Teachers Association on Wednesday sent a letter to lawmakers saying that even those schools in purple counties that are already offering in-person instruction should not be allowed to do so. “CTA continues to believe that schools in communities at Purple Tier levels of transmission and risk should not be open or reopen,” a letter from CTA president E.Toby Boyd and other top CTA leaders said. Read the complete article at: [California teachers’ unions affirm opposition to opening schools without more safety precautions | EdSource](#)

Momentum to offer more in-person public school instruction in California comes to a halt – by Louis Freedberg and Alexander Montero – December 24, 2020 – With the coronavirus out of control in California, and the health system reaching a breaking point, momentum toward opening more public schools for in-person instruction has largely come to a halt. ... Some districts already offering in-person instruction are returning to distance learning, if only temporarily, as school leaders try to get through the holiday season and weather the full force of the pandemic’s spread. Read the complete article at: [Momentum to offer more in-person public school instruction in California comes to a halt | EdSource](#)

California Assembly leaders press for all districts to resume in-school teaching in the spring: Legislation would require a return in stages once a county is out of the purple tier. By John Fensterwald – December 8, 2020 - Looking beyond the state-ordered Covid lockdown that has shut down all but essential services in all but a handful of counties in California, three Democratic Assembly leaders proposed legislation Monday that would require public school students to physically return to school in stages by early spring, after public health officials lift closure orders. Read the



complete article at: [California Assembly leaders press for all districts to resume in-school teaching in the spring | EdSource](#)

California substitute shortage compounded by pandemic could keep some schools closed: Lack of childcare, reluctance to learn new technology and fear of returning to classrooms during the pandemic are keeping subs at home – by Diana Lambert – December 28, 2020 – A critical shortage of substitute teachers during the pandemic may make it difficult for some California school districts to reopen campuses or to keep open schools already offering in-person instruction. A sharp decline in applications for substitute teaching credentials since January, as well as an exodus of already credentialed substitutes, have left some districts unable to keep classrooms open, especially as more teachers are quarantined after potential exposure to Covid-19. Read the complete article at: [California substitute shortage compounded by pandemic could keep some schools closed | EdSource](#)

Another step toward universal preschool in California? By Karen D’Souza – December 9, 2020 - Long a goal of early childhood advocates, universal preschool came a step closer to becoming reality this week. Assemblyman Kevin McCarty, D-Sacramento, a veteran advocate for early education, and other legislators on Tuesday proposed a sweeping suite of bills to help reform the state’s early childhood system. The bills seek to expand transitional kindergarten to all 4-year-olds, make child care more affordable by creating a sliding scale for family fees, increase reimbursement rates for preschool teachers and bar expulsions and suspensions in preschool. Read the complete article at: [Another step toward universal preschool in California? | EdSource](#)

How P.E. teachers are trying to get students off the couch during the pandemic – Keeping students active is crucial for their mental and physical health – especially now, teachers say. By Carolyn Jones – November 5, 2020 – Imagine trying to work out in a crowded living room, with no exercise equipment besides rolled-up socks and soup cans. ... For many students in California, that’s what physical education class looks like these days. Since campuses closed in March, P.E. teachers are scrambling for creative ways to keep students physically active – with no gymnasiums, sports fields or playgrounds – at a time when experts say students’ physical and mental health is paramount. Read the complete article at: <https://edsource.org/2020/how-p-e-teachers-are-trying-to-get-students-off-the-couch-during-the-pandemic/>

At the National Level:

California school districts, charter schools to get \$6.8 billion, in varying amounts, of federal aid: Title 1 funding formula will determine big differences in federal aid – By John Fensterwald and Daniel J. Willis – December 27, 2020 – The Covid-19 relief package Congress approved before Christmas will provide at least \$6.8 billion to California’s school districts and charter schools. That equals about an eighth of the \$54.9 billion that Congress will award to K-12 schools. President Trump signed the bill Dec.27 after threatening to veto it. ... For K-12 schools, the new federal funding is about four times as much as the \$13.5 billion in aid for schools under the CARES Act that Congress passed in March. But the combination of the two – about \$70 billion – is



substantially less than the \$98 billion that Congress provided K-12 under the economic recovery act that Congress funded in the midst of the Great Recession a decade ago, said Michael Griffith, a national expert on school finance who is currently a senior researcher and policy analyst at the Palo Alto-based Learning Policy Institute. Read the complete article at: [California school districts, charter schools to get \\$6.8 billion, in varying amounts, of federal aid | EdSource](#)

Database: Covid relief by district in California – By Daniel J. Willis and Justin Allen – December 27, 2020 - California will receive \$6.8 billion of the \$54.9 billion that Congress in Covid-19 relief funding for K-12 schools that President Trump signed into law Dec. 27. This database shows the distribution of the 90 percent of funding that will be distributed based on how much a school district or charter school receives in Title I funding. Because Title I is tied to the number of low-income children in a district, the amounts will vary considerably. Gov. Gavin Newsom has discretion over how to allot the remaining 10 percent to K-12 schools. Search through the database at: [Database: Covid relief by district in California | EdSource](#) Hint it is estimated that Capistrano Unified will receive approximately \$15,387,639.

Biden nominates Connecticut schools chief Cardona as education secretary – by Kara Arundel – December 23, 2020 – Miguel A. Cardona, Connecticut's Commissioner of Education and a former elementary school teacher and principal, was nominated as the 12th secretary of the U.S. Department of Education to serve the incoming Biden administration. He still needs to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Read more about Cardona's background and experience at: [Biden nominates Connecticut schools chief Cardona as education secretary | K-12 Dive](#)

Turning cameras off to keep student engagement on by Lauren Barack – December 9, 2020 – Requiring students to keep their video cameras on during virtual classes may create privacy issues, according to online learning considerations from the Future of Privacy Forum and the National Education Association. Cameras that peer into a student's home life can blur the boundary between their school environment and personal world, which have merged during the pandemic. That window may also reveal details about a student's life they may not want seen. Read the complete article at: [Turning cameras off to keep student engagement on | K-12 Dive](#)

Tracking how the coronavirus is impacting school districts: From the shift to distance learning to the impact on school budgets, we're collecting news, analysis and expert advice on how K-12 is responding to the pandemic. By Roger Riddell, Naaz Modan, and Kara Arundel – this is updated almost daily and you can review back to mid-May by week to see what has been happening. The nation's public school districts faced unprecedented disruption to the school year as the novel coronavirus pandemic shut down buildings and forced learning online, to the extent educators were able to do so. Shutdowns forced districts and policymakers alike to make strides in addressing the "homework gap" resulting from a lack of home internet and device access that already adversely affected many students prior to shutdowns. Further complicating the situation: Educators needed additional training, the delivery of curriculum had to be rethought, and many low-income students' only guaranteed meals throughout the day were through school programs. ... And that's not even considering



the impending funding tsunami expected from the economic impacts of the shutdowns, or the challenge of reopening schools in the fall and planning for a variety of scenarios. ... Follow along below as we track major news and analysis of the coronavirus's impact on K-12. Read more of what is happening at:

<https://www.educationdive.com/news/tracking-how-the-coronavirus-is-impacting-school-districts/578628/>

From the National PTA:

Advocacy letters for National PTA:

Please visit the Take Action site <https://www.pta.org/home/advocacy/take-action> to send a letter to your Congress members on the issues of the day/week/month. Here you can keep up-to-date on the latest issues the National PTA is supporting or opposing.

The 117th Congress starts on January 3, 2021, and is considering the following legislation items. The National PTA is supporting (green checkmarks) or opposing (red x) the following items:

Child Health and Safety

Education Technology and Student Data Privacy

Elementary and Secondary Education

Federal Investments in Education

Gun Safety and Violence Prevention

Post-Secondary Access and Opportunity

Special Education

