



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

February was Black History Month and as we enter National Women's History Month – and I am not sure we recognized enough amazing black educators who truly impacted the lives of so many people within our country – so from the National PTA I want to share:

Celebrating Black History Month: Honoring African American Educators and Advocates

Mary McLeod Bethune, [Mary McLeod Bethune | National Women's History Museum](#), is one of the most important black educators and civil rights leaders of the twentieth century. As a lifelong educator, she founded Bethune-Cookman college, which set the educational standards for today's black colleges. She went on to become the highest-ranking African American woman in government when she was named the Director of Negro Affairs for the National Youth Administration in 1936. In 1940, she became vice president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons (NAACP), a position she held for the rest of her life.

So, I hope you share with your units about Mary McLeod Bethune and her contributions to our country.

In Local News:

On February 26, 2021, Congressman Mike Levin hosted an excellent webinar on "Education Forum: Challenges and Opportunities for Black Students and Increasing Understanding, Equity and Diversity in Our Schools." The recording of the event is available for viewing and download at the following link: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/hMz7cyngAcfU242bOMFCg8AcUm5Q7FLvvRTG6KzPzO3cR1Mhp_zMnbPyJIL3BTAW.hp1NKI_0QR15Qzx Please note the Access Passcode is 3p&l8ekE If you did not have the chance to join the webinar live, please take a moment of your time to listen to the discussion and think about ways we can authentically impact the instruction of our students on the lives and history and culture of all students who walk through the doors of our schools.

At the February 17, 2021, Board Meeting – Trustees gave direction to staff on what they wanted to see within the PE Grading Policy that was being revisited. They did not reach a final decision that evening – it is slated to come back yet again at the March 17th board meeting. Be sure to check the district website prior to that meeting if this is a topic you are interested in.

The plan for the Cultural Proficiency Curriculum was pulled off of the February Board Meeting Agenda by staff. It is scheduled to come back before the board in April. Please take time to email the board your support of this work and the need to have curriculum that challenges our students and staff to have the not so fun conversations that guide us to a place where all will feel valued. While these are not easy lessons, they are not intended to make anyone feel less about themselves, but rather to help students develop their empathy skills and awareness that not all are as fortunate as some might be.

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:

Kevin Gordon does a weekly video "podcast" on YouTube that can be found here: [K-12 Politics and Tech - Education - YouTube](#) There is a new video posted each week. I encourage you to take 20 minutes a week to catch up on his latest updates.

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/opsdashboard/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:

March 3, 2021 – Special Board Meeting - [4163695457219343984.pdf \(schoolloop.com\)](#)

February 17, 2021 – Board Meeting - <https://capousd-ca.schoolloop.com/file/1514016268888/1531973256666/7290119953130700183.pdf>

January 20, 2021 – <https://capousd-ca.schoolloop.com/file/1514016268888/1531973256666/3151138416294557890.pdf>

January 6, 2021 – Special Board Meeting – Closed session only - <https://capousd-ca.schoolloop.com/file/1514016268888/1531973256666/4679134360524795183.pdf>

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. We are currently reading [White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism](#) by Robin Diangelo. We finished reading and discussing [So You Want to Talk About Race](#) by Ijeoma Oluo in February. The book gave detailed examples of why we need to talk about race, the author illustrated with examples from her own life. It was not an easy book to read, but it was informative and is a good jumping off point for our book club. I encourage all who are interested to borrow my copy of the book, check it out from a library, or purchase it yourself. I will say, I took copious notes within the book with my pink glitter pen – so whoever asks to borrow, know that you will see my thoughts scribbled on the pages as I read. A synopsis of our newest book will be provided after our book club discussion in March.

From Fourth District PTA:

Talking Points for Legislative Chairs, February 2021

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

- Governor Newsom is asking state lawmakers to take quick budget action on \$4.6 billion in one-time funding to address student learning loss through an extended school year, summer school, or other programs. He is also asking for quick approval of \$2 billion to help school districts re-open classrooms for pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The Communicator has additional details about the Governor's proposed budget.
- As PTA advocates for all children, it's important to be well informed. A good resource is the **Annual Report on the Conditions of Children**, which is published every year by the Orange County Health Care Department. The Communicator has a link to the report.
- State Superintendent of Schools Tony Thurmond says the top priority of the California Department of Education is to reopen schools by making them as safe as possible. He is not in favor of state-mandated reopening because circumstances differ at districts throughout the state. His department will apply to the federal government for permission to cancel this year's statewide assessment testing.
- Virtual advocacy events are planned by Fourth District, State PTA and National PTA in February and March. So many opportunities to get important information! Details are in the Communicator.

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):

- 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:

10 Things We Recommend to Reopen Schools Safely by the California PTA – updated February 26, 2021 - It's been almost a year since California closed school campuses. Not only are children falling behind academically, but the social isolation and fears of illness and death are taking an enormous toll on their emotional health. PTA parents across the state are frustrated by the slow reopening of schools and we share their frustration.

Last week, California State PTA put efforts into high gear, providing recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature for the quick and safe reopening of schools with the release of our **"10 Things California State PTA Recommends for the Safe Reopening of Schools."**

We unveiled these recommendations to the nearly 400 attendees at our annual legislation conference. These advocacy leaders from across the state took the PTA message with them on their legislator visits as part of the conference.

These recommendations are in addition to the months PTA leaders spent working with decision makers in Sacramento urging the safe reopening of schools and the prioritization of teachers in vaccine distribution.

To read the 10 recommendations on the California State PTA website, [10 Things California State PTA Recommends for the Safe Reopening of Schools | California State PTA \(capta.org\)](#) .

In State News:

California moves ahead to pursue flexibility waivers for standardized tests this year by Sydney Johnson – February 24, 2021 – The State Board of Education in California voted unanimously to prepare to apply for more flexible standardized testing options this year as nearly 80% of students across the state continue with distance learning. ... States are required to conduct standardized tests every year in math, English language arts and science, according to both state laws and the federal Every

Student Succeeds Act. When schools shut their buildings in March last year due to the pandemic, however, state officials said districts did not have to administer the tests pending getting a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education under then- Secretary Betsy DeVos. The department quickly granted waivers to all states relieving them of their testing obligations. Read the complete article regarding the state of testing for the 2020-21 school year and waivers at: <https://edsources.org/2021/california-moves-ahead-to-pursue-flexibility-waivers-for-standardized-tests-this-year/>

Newsom, lawmakers set April 1 deadline to reopen schools for K-2 students: \$2 billion in incentives would come with partially reopening middle and high schools by John Fensterwald – March 1, 2021 – Gov. Gavin Newsom and the Legislature have struck a deal to accelerate the reopening of school campuses by moving up the deadline to send the youngest students back to class in March. They also are adding \$2 billion in incentives and removing obstacles that districts had complained were standing in their way. Read the complete article at: <https://edsources.org/2021/newsom-lawmakers-set-april-1-deadline-to-reopen-schools-for-k-2-students/> The grandfather clause we reached out to you earlier to email our elected officials about helped with this bill and we were successful – districts that are already successfully open get to stay open under the original guidance. Thank you to all who sent in emails.

Rising tensions, heated words add pressure to reach a deal soon on reopening California schools: Assembly Budget Chair Phil Ting says school districts want money without accountability. By John Fensterwald – February 23, 2021 – Assembly Budget Committee Chairman Phil Ting, D-San Francisco, ended a hearing Monday as he started it, lashing out at school districts for criticizing a bill he and other legislative leaders are proposing that would condition \$2 billion in incentive funding on reopening schools, starting April 15. Read the complete article at: <https://edsources.org/2021/rising-tensions-heated-words-add-pressure-to-reach-a-deal-soon-on-reopening-california-schools/> For Capistrano there is some concern regarding the unintended consequences of vague language within this bill. As you received in February the letter to the legislator and governor, we need a specific clause that exempts districts that have already reopened to in-person and hybrid instruction from having to jump through these new hoops. Hopefully that language is inserted. At the present, it is not specific enough to provide clarity.

California legislators issue their conditions for reopening schools – without governor's backing: \$2 billion in incentives back on the table with longer timeline to bring back students by John Fensterwald – February 19, 2021 – In a sign that they remain at odds with Gov. Gavin Newsom, legislative leaders on Thursday released legislation laying out their version of what districts must do to reopen schools. What's missing, however, is the governor's support after weeks of negotiations. ... Senate Bill 86 and an identical version, Assembly Bill 86, which will be presented at a legislative hearing Monday, contains key elements that Newsom himself had proposed in his Safe Schools for All reopening plan in late December. These include \$2 billion in incentives to encourage districts to sign on, and requirements that school districts negotiate safety agreements and institute rigorous testing of students and staff to qualify for the money. Read the complete article at:

<https://edsources.org/2021/california-legislators-issue-their-conditions-for-reopening-schools-without-governors-backing/>

Why some school districts are open for in-person instruction but in some cases, neighboring ones aren't by Carolyn Jones – February 25, 2021 – A growing number of school districts in California are moving toward reopening campuses, but the process has been complicated, in some cases resulting in districts near each other operating on vastly different reopening schedules. Read the complete article at: <https://edsources.org/2021/why-some-california-school-districts-are-open-but-in-some-cases-the-neighboring-districts-arent/> Hint – Capistrano Unified is mentioned in this article highlighting how we reopened for in-person instruction.

Gov. Newsom's proposed cost of living increases could stave off cuts for some school districts: Governor's proposed cost-of-living adjustment would be a lifeline, but experts warn that districts should not get too comfortable. By Ali Tadayan – February 18, 2021 – Gov. Gavin Newsom's proposed cost-of-living adjustment for school districts – part of his \$89.2 billion 2021-2022 education budget pending before the Legislature – could turn the tide for some cash-strapped districts that were bracing for budget cuts. Read the complete article at <https://edsources.org/2021/newsoms-proposed-budget-could-stave-off-cuts-for-some-school-districts/> This is something that definitely reflects things happening within CUSD.

California teachers grapple with grading nearly a year after initial school closures by Sydney Johnson – February 9, 2021 – State law around distance learning does not require districts to return to letter grades. However, most districts reverted to their traditional grades this spring to increase student motivation, which some teachers said fell off under a pass/fail system. At least one bill making its way through the Legislature, AB104, attempts to address concerns about grading through multiple approaches, including allowing parents to request to change their child's letter grades in 2020-21 to pass/fail, and requiring CSU to accept those grades. It would also "encourage" UC to do the same. (The Legislature has limited authority to regulate UC under the State Constitution, but the same restrictions do not exist for CSU.) Read the complete article at: <https://edsources.org/2021/california-teachers-grapple-with-grading-nearly-a-year-after-initial-school-closures/>

How will expanded transitional kindergarten roll out? By Karen D'Souza – February 18, 2021 – Gov. Newsom's proposed budget calls for a \$500 million investment, a down payment toward the ultimate goal of offering transitional kindergarten to all 4-year-olds in the state. ... Newsom hopes to kick-start more programs for transitional kindergarten, or TK, as it is often called, by offering \$250 million in grants to school districts as an incentive to develop and expand these programs. The budget also includes \$50 million toward teacher training and \$200 million to build facilities for younger children. The K-12 budget "trailer bill", a 76-page document containing details about the governor's educational proposals, paints a clearer picture of how these incentives will be rolled out and what issues remain to be addressed. Read the complete article at: <https://edsources.org/2021/how-will-expanded-transitional-kindergarten-roll-out/>

At the National Level:

Eliminating microaggressions key to creating a more equitable school culture

by Shawna De La Rosa – February 1, 2021 – Developing an anti-racist school culture means re-examining policies and practices through the lens of equity. Grading systems, uniform protocol and lesson plans can all be innately biased. Racism can exist in policies, such as those informing dress code and hair styles, that can make students of color feel like they can't be authentic at school. For example, using the term "neat" when referring to appropriate types of hair styles sends the message that hairdos often worn by Black students aren't acceptable, a guide for Teach For America suggests. Read the complete article at: <https://www.k12dive.com/news/eliminating-microaggressions-key-to-creating-a-more-equitable-school-cultur/>

Miguel Cardona sails through Senate hearing amid reopening schools debate: His hearing comes as Republicans increasingly blame the Biden administration and teachers unions for standing in the way of reopening schools.

By Michael Stratford – February 3, 2021 – Miguel Cardona, President Joe Biden's nominee for Education secretary, breezed through his Senate confirmation hearing on Wednesday, winning some bipartisan support even amid an increasingly contentious national political debate over reopening schools during the pandemic. Read the complete article at: [Miguel Cardona sails through Senate hearing amid reopening schools debate - POLITICO](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/02/03/miguel-cardona-senate-hearing-reopening-schools/)

Schools must give standardized tests this year, Biden administration says by Sydney Johnson – February 22, 2021 – States must resume their annual standardized tests this spring, the Biden administration confirmed on Monday. While the tests will be required, the U.S. Department of Education is allowing for new flexible options such as shortening tests, extending the testing window and remote administration. Read the complete article at: <https://edsources.org/2021/schools-must-give-standardized-tests-this-spring/>

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:

How to Talk to Your Child About Racism by American Psychological Association – Featured article in Parenting – July 9, 2020 – Are you struggling to talk to your children about the ongoing racial tensions in our country and looking for tips to help start a conversation about racism? ... Psychologists say it is important to encourage children to celebrate their differences – diversity is a strength. For parents of color, this may involve celebrating your heritage and affirming their features and skin tone. For others, this may involve educating your child to become a better ally. This kind of positive and ethnic socialization can have a protective effect as they get older and encounter racial adversity. Read on for more tips at: [How to Talk to Your Child About Racism | Our Children \(ptaourchildren.org\)](https://ptaourchildren.org/How-to-Talk-to-Your-Child-About-Racism)

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