

CUCPTSA ADVOCACY NEWSLETTER APRIL 2016

FEDERAL

PTA Supports Voter Registration Drives

National PTA will honor National Voter Registration Day coming up on September 27, 2016 by highlighting the importance of voter registration and voting. National PTA believes voter engagement is vital as it: advances the mission and values of the PTA, increases voter turnout numbers and helps legislators and local leaders realize the importance of PTA-related issues/priorities. National PTA encourages PTA members from across the country to engage with their communities about registering to vote and the significance of the voting process. PTA members can get involved by reviewing National PTA election guides, and by rolling out voter registration and pledge campaigns.

May 23, 2016 is the last day to register to vote or update your registration in order to be eligible to participate in California's presidential primary election to be held June 7. Since the passage of Proposition 14 in 2010, each party may decide whether to allow voters who register with no party preference to vote for candidates on that party's ballot. This year the Democratic Party will allow voters who register with no party preference to vote for a Democratic presidential candidate. The Republican Party will allow only registered Republicans to vote on the Republican ballot.

Supreme Court Hands Down Ruling in Case Affecting CA Teachers Union

Friedrichs v. CTA challenged the requirement that teachers pay fees to their local employee union to help pay for bargaining costs, even if they are not members of the union. The Supreme Court heard the case on January 11. Justice Scalia's death a month later on February 13 meant that there no longer are nine Justices to deliberate and decide the case. On March 29, the Court issued a 4-4 tie decision, which automatically leaves current law in place. On April 8, The Center for Individual Rights, which is representing nine California teachers and the Christian Educators Association International in the case against CTA, filed a petition for rehearing—asking the Supreme Court to re-hear *Friedrichs v. CTA* when a new, ninth Justice is confirmed. The Court could grant the petition now or it could hold the petition until a ninth Justice is confirmed and decide whether to grant it then.

The lawsuit sought to overturn a previous Supreme Court decision that allowed states to require all employees represented by a public-employee union to pay “fair- share” or “agency” fees. The plaintiffs argued that this violates their First Amendment rights. The CTA and the State of California contended that the result of contract negotiations affect both union members and non-members, so it is appropriate for non-members to share the costs for those negotiations. If the court case is granted a rehearing and is successful, all union dues and fees would have to be voluntary.

Nation's Facilities Funding Falls Short

Both California and the nation as a whole are not spending nearly enough to maintain and improve public school facilities, according to a report released in March. National spending falls short by \$46 billion annually, the report states. California is about average in its spending on

school facilities but falls \$6.7 billion short per year, or about \$1,083 per student. The report was prepared by three nonprofit organizations: the Center for Green Schools, the National Council on School Facilities and the 21st Century School Fund.

“Research shows that high quality facilities help improve student achievement, reduce truancy and suspensions, improve staff satisfaction and retention, and raise property values,” the report states. “They also are integral to ensuring equity in educational offerings and opportunities for students.” In most states, including California, facilities are funded through a combination of state and local money. Poorer districts that cannot afford building upgrades end up spending more of their general funds on repairs. The study is available at centerforgreenschools.org

STATE

PTA Sponsored Family Engagement Bill Passes Assembly Committee Vote

Family engagement is the number-one predictor of student success. That’s why California State PTA is sponsoring Assembly Bill 2680 by Assemblywoman Susan Bonilla. This bill demonstrates a commitment to connecting families, schools and communities to improving student outcomes.

By allocating an unspecified amount of one-time investment of seed money for school districts to develop family-engagement strategies, AB 2680 will support parents as their children’s first teachers and encourage parents to advocate for a quality education for their child and for all children. Family engagement is more than just checking off a box or holding one meeting a year. Effective family engagement is an in-depth and ongoing process – we need to deeply engage parents in all aspects of their child’s education. AB 2680 will strengthen school communities with proven strategies. With the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), school districts are required to engage parents in making important decisions about their child’s progress.

Senate Bill Introduced to Provide Low-Income Students with Pipeline to UC System

Senate President pro tem Kevin de León unveiled a bill in early April to offer more advanced college-readiness coursework in K-12 schools and help low-income students become more qualified applicants for the University of California. Senate Bill 1050 will give school districts and charter schools incentives to offer more “rigorous” work and funnel more disadvantaged students into the UC system.

Of the 6.2 million pupils enrolled in California public schools, 59 percent are low income. California’s high school graduation rate is 81 percent, but only 42 percent of high school graduates meet “A-G” course requirements, which are necessary for admission to California’s public universities. The Public Policy Institute of California reports that, in 2030, 38 percent of jobs will depend on workers with at least a bachelor degree, but only 33 percent of California workers will have one; thus, California will be short 1.1 million workers who have a bachelor degree by 2030.

The K–12 College Readiness Block Grant is hereby established for the purposes of preparing California’s high school pupils, particularly pupils who are traditionally underrepresented in the University of California and the California State University, including unduplicated pupils as

defined in Section 42238.02, to be eligible for admission into a postsecondary institution, and increasing the four-year-college-going rates of these pupils. As a condition for receiving funds under this article, a school district or charter school shall develop a plan describing how the funds will be spent. The plan shall include information regarding how it aligns with the school district's local control and accountability plan

LOCAL

CUSD Announces Tentative Agreement with CUEA

On March 23, 2016, the Capistrano Unified School District (CUSD) reached a tentative agreement with the Capistrano Unified Educators Association (CUEA). Under this agreement, teacher evaluations will be tied to student performance and progress, greater transparency and communication with parents in the education of their children will be implemented and greater support will be provided to ensure students have an implementable plan for college or career after High School graduation.

Under this new agreement, and through collaboration between CUSD and the CUEA Teacher Evaluation Joint Task Force, teacher evaluation and performance will be directly tied to student performance and progress through assessments to include performance goals, pre- and post-observation of classrooms and teachers, and a formal evaluation process that will include self-assessment.

Additionally, under this new agreement, teachers will utilize School Loop to communicate with students, parents or guardians regarding grades, academic matters and other educationally relevant issues. This universal adoption is vital to create consistency of engagement and increase communication and transparency across the district for every student, family and guardian of the District.

Finally, the District will be open to add College and Career Counselors with differentiated hours to support students after the regular school day has ended – as late as 9 p.m. The addition of this position supports one of the District's highest priorities: to ensure that every student has a plan for college, military and professional careers when they graduate.