

CUCPTSA Advocacy Newsletter April 2017

Federal

The following bill PTA opposes: (all have to do with School Vouchers)

HR 610 Choices in Education Act of 2017

This bill repeals the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and limits the authority of the Department of Education (ED) such that ED is authorized only to award block grants to qualified states. The bill establishes an education voucher program, through which each state shall distribute block grant funds among local educational agencies (LEAs) based on the number of eligible children within each LEA's geographical area. From these amounts, each LEA shall: (1) distribute a portion of funds to parents who elect to enroll their child in a private school or to home-school their child, and (2) do so in a manner that ensures that such payments will be used for appropriate educational expenses. To be eligible to receive a block grant, a state must: (1) comply with education voucher program requirements, and (2) make it lawful for parents of an eligible child to elect to enroll their child in any public or private elementary or secondary school in the state or to home-school their child.

No Hungry Kids Act

The bill repeals a specified rule that established certain nutrition standards for the national school lunch and breakfast programs. (In general, the rule requires schools to increase the availability of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or fat free milk in school meals; reduce the levels of sodium, saturated fat, and trans fat in school meals; and meet children's nutritional needs within their caloric requirements.)

H.R. 895: Educational Opportunities Act

To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against tax for qualified elementary and secondary education tuition.

H.R. 1387: To reauthorize the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act, and for other purposes.

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S. 148: Educational Opportunities Act

A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against tax for qualified elementary and secondary education tuition.

The following Bills PTA is Supporting:

H.R. 695: Child Protection Improvements Act of 2017

To amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a national criminal history background check system and criminal history review program for certain individuals who, related to their employment, have access to children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes.

H.R. 627: Streamlining Energy Efficiency for Schools Act of 2017

To amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to provide for the dissemination of information regarding available Federal programs relating to energy efficiency projects for schools, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1864: To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to allow local educational agencies to use Federal funds for programs and activities that address chronic absenteeism.

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S. 383: Streamlining Energy Efficiency for Schools Act

A bill to coordinate the provision of energy retrofitting assistance to schools.

H.R. 1478: Gun Violence Research Act

To repeal the provision that in practice prohibits the Department of Health and Human Services from sponsoring research on gun violence in fiscal year 2017, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1809: Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017

To reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, and for other purposes.

State

Vaccinations

Vaccination rates hit an all-time high for California kindergartners, the California Department of Public Health said as it **announced** its first findings since a new law ended the era of the “personal belief exemption” that allowed thousands of parents to choose not to vaccinate their children who attend public and private schools.

The percentage of kindergartners who received all required vaccines rose to 95.6 percent in 2016-17, up from the 92.8 percent rate in 2015-16. This is the highest reported rate for the current set of immunization requirements, which began in the 2001-02 school year, the state said.

To be clear, California parents do not have to immunize their children. But under the new law, **Senate Bill 277**, children must be immunized against 10 serious communicable diseases if they want to attend public or private schools and child care centers. If unvaccinated, children must be home schooled or enrolled in independent study with no classroom instruction or receiving special education services, the California Department of Public Health said.

Children may be granted a medical exemption to vaccinations with a note from a doctor attesting that the child’s health condition prohibits vaccinations. Rates of medical exemptions rose to 0.5 percent in 2016-17 from 0.2 percent in 2015-16. The California Department of Health also released a new category of information – 0.5 percent of kindergartners were reported as lacking full immunization because they attended private home schools or independent study programs or received special education services.

While personal belief exemptions are no longer granted, 0.6 percent of kindergartners were not vaccinated because of a personal belief exemption they had obtained a year earlier in transitional kindergarten. The law stated that their exemption would continue to be valid in kindergarten. All told, 1.5 percent of kindergartners lacked required immunizations in 2016-17, a decline from the 2.5 percent rate in 2015-16, because of medical exemptions, previously awarded personal belief exemptions or enrollment in home schooling, independent study or special education, the state said.

Graduation Rates

More than eight in 10 public high school students in the class of 2016 graduated on time, citing higher education funding as a major cause.

Just over 83 percent of the students finished in four years, up about 1 percentage point from the prior year to reach a new high, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson said.

He attributed the improvements in large part to more funding for California public schools that has reduced class sizes and expanded arts and science education.

Graduation rates have risen for seven consecutive years, with the biggest increases seen among African-American and Latino students as well as English learners, according to data from the California Department of Education.

However, graduation rates for those groups still lag behind the numbers for white and Asian students. In 2016, 80 percent of Hispanic or Latino students and less than 73 percent of African-American students graduated on time, compared to 93 percent of Asian students and 88 percent of white students. About 72 percent of English learners graduated on time. Torlakson said those students have improved the most since last year.

Read more here: <http://www.sacbee.com/article143944664.html#storylink=cpy>

Update on K-12 Student Attendance-California Legislative Analyst’s Office

In early March, we received the first report of 2016-17 attendance data from the California Department of Education (CDE). The data show that statewide attendance is closely tracking the latest estimates from the administration and our office. Below, we provide background on the calculation of school attendance, describe the recent update, and discuss implications for the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee and school funding.

Background

School Districts Report Attendance Data Three Times Per Year. California requires school districts to track the average daily attendance (ADA) of their students. If a district's school year is 180 days, and an average of 1,000 students attend each day, its ADA is 1,000. School districts report their ADA to the state three times per year. The first time (known as "P-1") covers attendance data from the beginning of the school year through December. The department certifies this data in February. The second time (known as "P-2") runs from the beginning of the school year through April 15 and is certified in June. The third time (known as "Annual") covers the entire school year and is certified in February of the following school year.

Attendance Affects Funding for Certain Programs. The department uses attendance data to allocate state funding for various programs, including the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and state special education categorical program. For most programs, the state finalizes funding based on the P-2 attendance data. For a few programs—generally those operated by county offices of education—the state waits to finalize funding until it receives Annual data. The role of the P-1 report is to provide an interim estimate of attendance until better data become available.

Attendance Also Affects Proposition 98 Minimum Guarantee. The state also uses attendance data in the calculation of the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee. In most years (22 of the past 28), the minimum guarantee equals the amount of state and local funding schools received the previous year, adjusted for changes in statewide ADA and growth in state revenue (Test 3) or the state economy (Test 2). In Test 3 years, changes in ADA also affect the size of the supplemental appropriation the state is required to make to ensure school funding grows in tandem with the rest of the budget. In the other six years, Test 1 was operative or the minimum guarantee was suspended. In these cases, attendance does not affect school funding. Proposition 98 specifies that the minimum guarantee is not adjusted downward for declines in ADA unless attendance declined the two previous years. This "hold harmless" provision insulates school funding from short-term declines in attendance.

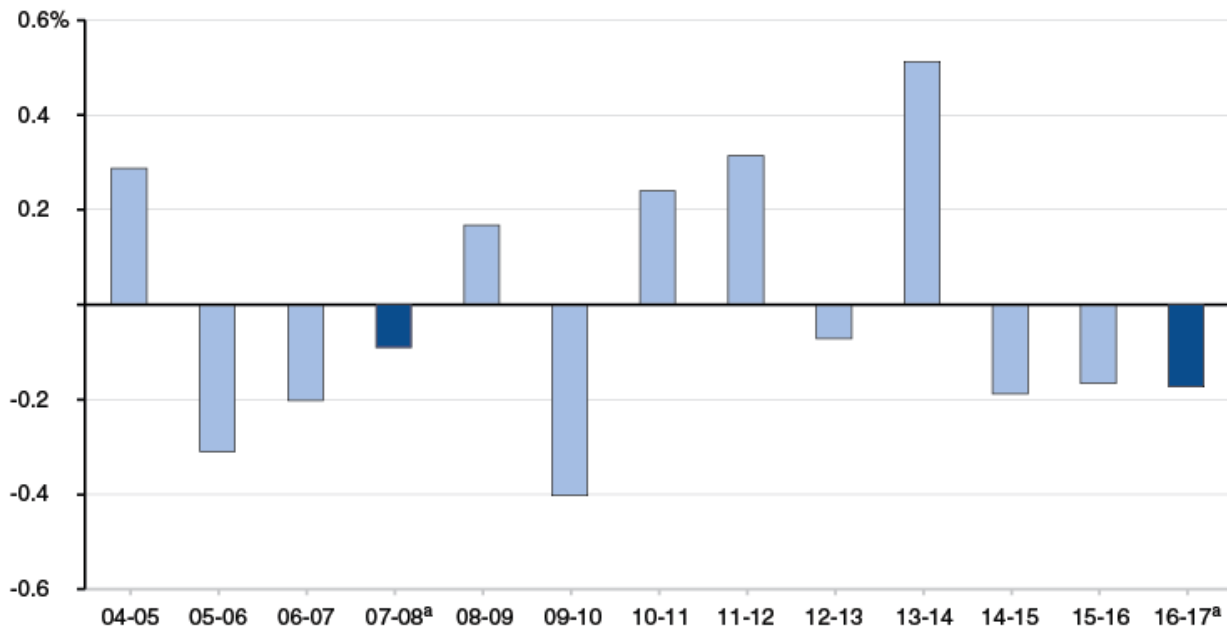
Attendance Is Closely Tracking Estimates. The department recently certified P-1 attendance data for 2016-17. Based on this data, we now estimate statewide attendance in 2016-17 at 5,961,453. Previous estimates of K-12 attendance by the administration and our office were very close to this new estimate. Specifically, the administration in January had estimated attendance at 5,958,933, and our office in November had estimated attendance at 5,956,814. Though the new data still reflect a 0.17 percent decline over the 2015-16 attendance level (5,971,789), the decline appears slightly less steep than previously estimated.

Updated Attendance Data Leads to Small Increases in Estimated Program Costs and Proposition 98 Minimum Guarantee. Compared with the Governor's January estimate, the updated attendance data results in 2016-17 LCFF costs increasing by about \$20 million and the minimum guarantee increasing by about \$13 million, all else constant. Though one would expect the guarantee to grow by a larger dollar amount than LCFF costs (which account for about 80 percent of spending inside the guarantee), changes in the Test 3 supplemental appropriation dampen some growth in the guarantee (to ensure school funding does not grow more quickly than the rest of the budget). The state typically addresses any changes in LCFF costs and the minimum guarantee as part of the May Revision or budget closeout, as which times the Legislature revisits various other Proposition 98 inputs and proposals.

2016-17 Marks Third Consecutive Year of Attendance Decline. The figure below shows the annual percent change in statewide attendance since 2004-05. Over the period, statewide attendance has hovered around zero, with increases in five of the years shown and declines in the other eight years. Due to the two-year hold-harmless provision for the minimum guarantee, the state has not adjusted the guarantee downward for most of these declines. For example, although attendance declined over a three-year period from 2005-06 through 2007-08, the state adjusted the guarantee downward only for the decline in the final year of the period. Similarly, although attendance declined in 2014-15 and 2015-16, the state made no downward adjustments in those years, but it is adjusting the guarantee downward in 2016-17, as this marks the third consecutive year of declines. Both the administration and our office believe attendance is likely to continue declining for several more years. Such declines would lower the minimum guarantee as well as program costs, all else constant.

Annual Percent Change in K-12 Attendance

(2004-05 through 2016-17)



^a The darker bars shown for 2007-08 and 2016-17 indicate years the state adjusted the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee downward to reflect declines in attendance. 2016-17 reflects estimate based on P-1 attendance report.

Local

4th District Update:

Talking Points for Legislative Chairs, April 2017

- Details are in the April issue of the *Advocacy Communicator*.
- National PTA is disappointed that President Trump's proposed budget includes \$9.2 billion in cuts to public education while including a \$250 million investment to expand private school options. PTA opposes any private school choice system that drains public school resources.
- On the positive side, the President's budget adds \$1 billion for Title 1 schools, which serve high percentages of students from low-income families, and maintains \$13 billion in special education grants.
- National PTA is opposed to vouchers, tax credits and any other programs that divert public money to private schools.
- National PTA supports charter schools as long as they follow PTA positions and principles.
- Did you know that California's State Education Code requires public schools to teach visual and performing arts? The *Communicator* lists the Ed Code sections that deal with arts education in grade 1 through 12.
- Five Orange County school superintendents participated in the Advocacy Forum last month. Some of their comments are included in this issue of the *Communicator*.

Find extended details on these talking points in the 4th District Communicator located at:

<http://www.fourthdistrictpta.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Advocacy-Communicator-APRIL-2017-002.pdf>

Upcoming CUSD Dates to know:

April 14 – 9AM - CUCPTSA Legislation/Advocacy Meeting – District Office
April 17 – 9AM - CUCPTSA Council Meeting – District Office
April 19 – 7PM – School Board Meeting
April 20 – 9:30AM - Special Education CAC Meeting – District Office
April 20 – time TBD Special Education Sunshine Awards
April 28-30 CA PTA State Convention
May 5 - 9AM - CUCPTSA Legislation/Advocacy Meeting – District Office
May 10 – 7PM – School Board Meeting
May 15 – 9AM - CUCPTSA Council Meeting – TBD
May 17 – 7PM – School Board Meeting
May 22 – 9AM – Parent Advisory Council
May 24 – 7PM – School Board Meeting
May 29 – Memorial Day – NO SCHOOL
June 1 – Last Day of School
June 14 – 7PM – School Board Meeting
June 28 – 7PM – School Board Meeting

School Board Update

March 22, 2017 School Board Meeting

Meeting agenda can be found at: <http://capousd-ca.schoolloop.com/file/1218998819331/1455438848279/576115885391746174.pdf> and audio of the meeting can be found at: <http://cusd.capousd.org/cusdweb/audio2016-17.html>

- Board adopted MOU with The Ranch to have 2 additional appraisals done on the valuation of Esencia School and to move forward with the purchase of the property for the building of the new Esencia School site.
- Board approved applying for a GRANT for the purchase of 5 electric buses. They have not purchased the buses, but are applying for a grant that would cover the cost of the buses. This grant is with the Southern California Air Quality Control Board.

Fourth District Advocacy Forum March 14, 2017 (From Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator April 2017).

Many thanks to the superintendents who participated in our Advocacy Forum in March. They are:

Mike Christensen, Orange Unified School District, **Dr. Joanne Culverhouse**, La Habra City School District **Dr. Gregory A. Franklin**, Tustin Unified School District, **Gregg Haulk**, Huntington Beach City School District, **Dr. Frederick Navarro**, Newport-Mesa Unified School District

Here are some highlights:

Teacher evaluations

All of the districts try to help teachers develop professionally, rather than dismissing them. “You can’t supervise teachers into submission,” said Franklin. There is an emphasis on conversations, building relationships, and working together to help students be successful. Only a few teachers need to be removed from the classroom.

Budget challenges: The five school districts have different budget challenges depending on the types of students they serve, since the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) provides more money for districts that serve large numbers of students who are low-income and English language learners. Huntington Beach City School District, which has only 20 percent of high-needs students, is the lowest funded school district in Orange County. “When the economy slows down we will be in an incredible amount of trouble,” said Haulk.

Newport-Mesa is “community-funded.” Community funded districts rely on local property taxes to meet the state's minimum funding requirement and then retain any additional local taxes collected; unlike most districts, they do not rely on the state for funds to bring them up to that minimum, based on student attendance. “We have to be very careful with our reserves because we can’t get bailed out by the state in tough times,” said Navarro. He added that although the district receives no LCFF funding, it still has to follow LCFF regulations, including spending additional money on high-needs students.

In the La Habra City School District, 77 percent of the students are high-needs so the district gets supplemental funds as well as a concentration grant for the high percentage of students in those categories.

While funding levels may vary, the districts share some problems in common. One is the cost of providing special education, which is dramatically increasing, going as high as \$12 million in Huntington Beach and \$15 million in La Habra. All of the superintendents agree that these children should be served but that funding is inadequate.

The state’s new requirement for higher contributions to the employee retirement systems is also causing a headache for the superintendents. Tustin Unified will get a projected funding increase of \$2.2 million next year, but payments to the retirement system will go up by \$2.7 million, said Franklin.

Funding is on a downward trend and districts will have to start looking at what they can do less of, said Christensen. “The state is not helping us with the message. The Governor makes a presentation and says schools are getting three-quarters of a billion dollars more, but he doesn’t say he is taking out one billion for [the retirement system],” he said.

The superintendents also pointed to California’s lack of commitment to education in general. When Ronald Reagan was governor, five percent of the state’s economic wealth went to schools; that is now down to three percent, said Franklin. It doesn’t make sense to advocate for welfare programs and prisons when investment in education would decrease the need for those, he added.

Parent involvement in the development of Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs)

All of the school districts look for input from various groups, including PTA, ELAC, school site council, teachers, and other school staff. There is also a push to get more participation from students. Culverhouse said that in her district many parents are afraid to attend meetings or fill out forms or surveys, due to current federal immigration issues. Haulk talked about making sure everyone feels safe in sharing opinions and ideas. Those who yell the loudest should not get all the attention, he said.

Dashboard

The superintendents welcomed the new school accountability system as a way for parents and the community to look at the whole child and evaluate schools through multiple measures. “The old system was punitive; the new one gives credit for growth.” Christensen said. The information in the Dashboard is two years old, but the superintendents hope the system will continue to evolve and improve.

Changes in federal education policy

There is a lot of uncertainty about what the federal government may do. The effects could be extremely devastating or not too bad. More will be evident when the federal budget is passed in October. The superintendents say they are paying attention and trying to be pragmatic about whatever comes. Haulk expressed concern that the new head of the Department of Education has never been in a public school. Franklin referred to President Trump’s statement that the schools are “flush with cash” and depriving children of a good education. “If we allow that kind of a gross generalization to go unanswered, shame on us,” he said. Public officials should be invited to visit public schools and find out what is really happening there. “We are doing an amazing job in our classrooms,” said Navarro. O