

CUCPTSA ADVOCACY NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 2016

FEDERAL

Full National PTA 2016 Policy Agenda Now Viewable at www.pta.org

A few highlights of the Federal Public Policy Agenda include:

Federal Investments in Education - *In fiscal year 2015, education funding represented 3% of total federal spending.* Federal funding for public education has experienced dramatic cuts over the past several years due to automatic budget cuts, known as sequestration.

Early Learning and Childhood Education - *Research shows that it is imperative to start educating all children before they enter kindergarten.* The positive outcomes associated with early learning include increased graduation rates, higher educational attainment and lower incarceration rates.

Child Health and Safety - *One out of every four students (22%) report being bullied during the school year.* Many schools and districts have implemented policies and approaches such as automatic suspension or expulsion, conflict resolution and school-wide assemblies that **do not** effectively address underlying causes of aggressive behavior(s). Research shows that effective prevention programs focus on the multiple factors that contribute to aggressive behavior(s), rather than the individual.

In 2013, an estimated 2.6 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 in the U.S. had at least one major depressive episode in the past year. This represented 10.7% of the U.S. population aged 12 to 17. PTA urges policymakers to support and invest in programs that provide for a child's health and wellness—including mental health—as they progress through each stage of development into adulthood.

Gun Safety and Violence Prevention - *Gun violence is the second leading cause of death, after motor vehicle accidents, for young people ages 1-19 in the United States.* PTA urges policymakers to support legislation requiring a waiting period and comprehensive background checks prior to buying a firearm for purchases from licensed and unlicensed dealers, and to pass legislation banning the sale, transfer, manufacturing and importation of military-style assault weapons and high- capacity ammunition magazines

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention - *\$100,000 a year or more of tax dollars are spent on a minor's confinement when individualized, community- based services for youth cost less than half that amount.* PTA urge policymakers to provide incentives to states to prohibit the detention of children for status offenses—such as breaking curfew, truancy or running away—and promote community-based, school-based and family-focused interventions

Postsecondary Access and Opportunity - *Between 1973 and 2018, projections show that jobs available for workers with postsecondary education are projected to increase from 28% to 63% of all occupations.* The gap between children from high- and low-income families is growing in college entry, persistence, and graduation. PTA urges policymakers to promote policies to improve college affordability, simplify the application process for all forms of financial aid and expand access to in-state tuition.

Supreme Court Heard Arguments in Case Affecting Teachers Union

Friedrichs v. CTA challenges 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 and will announce its ruling later this year. The lawsuit seeks 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 argue that this violates their First Amendment rights. The CTA and the State of California contend 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 successful, all union dues and fees would have to be voluntary. This could undermine the bargaining and political clout of the CTA as well as other public employee unions in California and perhaps in the 24 other states that have mandatory fair share union fees.

STATE

Budget Process Underway in State Capitol

California’s budget process began last month with the release of the governor’s proposed budget, which increases funding for K-12 schools by \$2.4 billion. The governor’s proposal includes \$1.3 billion in back payments for K-12 mandates, regulations that the state put in place and was required to pay for. School districts may use this funding as they choose. A backlog of \$1.8 billion would remain. The budget also includes \$248 million in new and ongoing funding for Career Technical Education programs in schools and community colleges. During the next months, Assembly and Senate budget committees will review the proposal and develop their own versions of the budget. In mid-May, the governor will issue an updated “May Revise” version of the budget based on actual revenues received through taxes. The state Constitution requires the legislators to complete the budget by June 15. If they miss the deadline, they permanently lose their pay and expenses for every day that the budget is not passed

State Courts Hear Two Cases Regarding Rights of Students

Robles-Wong v. California contends that inadequate state funding denies children their constitutional right to an adequate education. In 2011, a Superior Court judge heard the case and ruled that California children have a fundamental right to an education, but the Legislature is not required to fund public education at a specific level. The defendants appealed, and a California Court of Appeal heard the case on January 27. The plaintiffs are awaiting a decision and hope that the case will be returned to the Superior Court for trial. California State PTA is one of the plaintiffs in this case.

Vergara v. California claims that teacher tenure, layoff, and dismissal practices are to blame for the state’s achievement gap and that this violates the rights of students, especially those who are low-income. In 2014, a Superior Court judge agreed that the five statutes in question protected a small but significant number of “grossly ineffective” teachers, causing disproportionate harm to poor and minority students. The State of California and the state’s two teacher unions appealed the ruling. The case will be heard in an appellate court on February 25.

LOCAL

CUSD Announces Hiring of New Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator

CUCPTSA has long advocated for access to visual and performing arts for programs for all students and promoted imbedding the arts into all grade level curriculums. CUSD recently announced the appointment of a new coordinator of Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) programs, Mr. Neil Anderson. The plan is for Mr. Anderson to bring together teachers, students and communities to expand the District's offerings in all visual and performing arts programs.

CUSD Receives \$3.2 Million Grant for CTE Programs

The District is set to receive \$3.2 million this month from a new, state-funded Career and Technical Education (CTE) grant program, which was included in the 2015-16 state budget last summer. (CUSD has earned one of the larger awards in the first year of the CTE Incentive Grant program.) In partnership with South Coast ROP and Laguna Beach Unified, CUSD will be able to update and expand its existing 24 CTE course pathways and increase elective offerings at all of its middle schools. In the last year, CTE courses have served 33% of the district's 16,000 high school students, and plans are to increase that number significantly.

A new lab at Capistrano High School is a partnership with the local community college, Saddleback, and with Haas Automation, the largest machine tool builder in the western world that manufactures a complete line of computer numerical control (CNC) machine products. The use of CNC machining means a computer converts a design produced by Computer Aided Design (CAD) software into numbers. The numbers act as coordinates of a graph that control the movement of the cutter to create the desired product. Students in this program will learn and use CAD software to design parts and tools and then print them out using CNC machinery or 3D printers.

Another new lab being developed at San Clemente High School will host an information technology and communications systems pathway in partnership with Cisco, a multinational technology company headquartered in San Jose that designs, manufactures and sells networking equipment.

Yet a third new CTE program being developed with the grant funds is a hospitality academy at Dana Hills High School in partnership with the area's St. Regis Monarch Beach Hotel, a five-star facility that will provide internship opportunities for students in culinary arts and all aspects of hotel management. Other CTE programs such as the automotive pathway and the health sciences academy will be getting upgraded equipment and facilities as well.

School Calendar Discussions Begin for 2017/18 school year and beyond

CUSD is in process of creating the school calendar for the 2017/18 school year and beyond. To engage the community, they will be conducting a phone survey of a representative selection of families. In addition, the district will host 3 community forums. Should you wish to share your opinions about the CUSD school calendar through email, please contact the District through the following email address: calendarinput@capousd.org.