CUCPTSA ADVOCACY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2017

FEDERAL:

The U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee has scheduled a hearing Jan. 11 for Betsy DeVos—President-Elect Trump's nominee for U.S. Secretary of Education—to appear before the Committee for her confirmation hearing. DeVos is one of many political appointees required to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate prior to assuming a position in the federal government.

ALEXANDRIA, VA. (January 4, 2017)—The following statement can be attributed to National PTA President Laura Bay:

"Today, the Senate announced the confirmation hearing for Betsy DeVos on Jan. 11, 2017. We respect the confirmation process and pending her confirmation, we stand ready to work with Ms. DeVos to ensure that the priorities of National PTA are included in the new administration's education agenda.

"Our association remains steadfast in our approach of putting the needs of all children first by advocating for high-quality public education. National PTA supports public education as the major vehicle for preserving the basic values of a democratic system of government. This system must be strengthened with the support of adequate funding, and continue to be governed by public officials. We oppose any private school choice system—vouchers, tax credits or deductions—that would divert public school resources.

"National PTA supports high academic standards for all students and advocates to maintain, strengthen and implement state-designed college and career ready standards. These standards should have aligned curriculum and assessments to support academic achievement and college and workplace readiness. Furthermore, our association seeks to expand access to high-quality early education, improve child nutrition programs, provide access to technology in schools, ensure safe environments in and outside of school, and increase federal investments in education.

"For 120 years, National PTA has been a leading voice in the pursuit of putting children first in policy decisions at the federal and local level. We have worked closely with every administration throughout our long history. Our association looks forward to working with the incoming administration, the Department of Education, advocates and policymakers to provide all children with high-quality educational opportunities and to promote their well-being.

For more information about National PTA's position statements, visit PTA.org/Advocacy.

STATE

Last November, the SBE approved a new California Science Framework to guide teachers, administrators and textbook publishers in teaching the new standards that emphasize scientific practices, thinking and reasoning. The California Department of Education (CDE) is preparing a new online science assessment to reflect the new standards and framework. A pilot test will take place this spring in grades five, eight and in one high school grade.

California's updated, 21st century science curriculum covers instruction in kindergarten through grade eight. It expands and refines the discussion of climate change and for the first time includes engineering, environmental literacy and strategies to support girls and young women in science.

Even though the U.S. Department of Education has not granted California a waiver from using the old pencil and paper California Science Standards Test that has been used since 1989, the plan to begin phasing in the online science

test fits squarely with a "<u>Testing Action Plan</u>" offered by the Obama Administration in early 2016. That plan, encourages states and school districts to reform practices that result in students spending too much time taking standardized tests, as well as practices that result in tests that are redundant or fail to provide useful information. A decision on the waiver should be made soon.

Key New California Laws for 2017:

In 2016, the state legislature sent Governor Brown 1,059 pieces of legislation. Of these, 898 the governor signed into law, with 159 vetoed. 2 became law without signing them.

A sampling of new laws that take effect in January:

<u>Child Safety Seats</u>: This law was passed in 2015 legislative session, it takes effect January 1. 1. Children under two years of age must ride rear-facing in an appropriate child passenger safety seat. Children weighing 40 pounds or more, or standing 40 or more inches tall, are exempt. California law continues to require that all children under the age of eight be properly restrained in an appropriate child safety seat in the back of the vehicle.

<u>Use of Electronic Devices:</u> Motorists are no longer permitted to hold a wireless telephone or electronic wireless communications device while driving a motor vehicle. Rather than holding the device, it must be mounted in the 7-inch square in the lower corner of the windshield farthest removed from the driver or in a 5-inch square in the lower corner of the windshield nearest to the driver. Another option is to affix the device to the dashboard in a place that does not obstruct the driver's clear view of the road and does not interfere with the deployment of an airbag. The law does allow a driver to operate one of these devices with the motion of a single swipe or tap of the finger, but not while holding it.

<u>School Bus Safety:</u> This law requires all school buses, school pupil activity buses, youth buses, and child care motor vehicles used to transport school-age children to be equipped with a "child safety alert system". Every school is required to have a transportation safety plan with procedures to ensure that a pupil is not left unattended in a vehicle.

<u>Children's Safety:</u> Schools already have strict rules for athletes in regards to sport practices and protocols for head injuries such as removing the athlete for the rest of the day and keeping them sidelined until cleared by a licensed health care provider. Assembly Bill 2007 extends these rules to youth sports organizations, along with training for coaches and concussions.

Sex Crimes: Assembly Bill 701 broadens the definition of rape to include "all forms of nonconsensual sexual assault". Assembly Bill 2888 makes sexually assaulting an unconscious person a crime with a mandatory prison sentence. Rape, sexual assault, and other sex offenses committed in 2017 will no longer be subject to a statute of limitations, under Senate Bill 813.

<u>Docs and Prescription Drugs:</u> Inspired by the Bay Area News Group Drugging Our Kids Investigation, which revealed the state's dependence on psychotropic medications to control troubled children, lawmakers passed legislation to hold physicians accountable. Senate Bill 1174 puts doctors who recklessly prescribe psychiatric drugs at risk of losing their medical license. Senate Bill 1291 will require more transparency and tracking of mental health services for foster kids.

For more information, go to http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/

LOCAL

CUSD has released the school calendar for 2017-2018. School will begin Tuesday, August 22, 2017 and the last day of school is Thursday, June 7th, 2018. To see the entire calendar, go to CUSD website.

Four members of the Capistrano Unified School District Board of Trustees were sworn into office Wednesday evening, December 14, during the regular Board meeting of the Capistrano Unified School District.

The Board also elected Martha McNicholas as its new President, Gila Jones as the Vice President and Patricia Holloway as Clerk of the Board.

Amy Hanacek was re-elected to Trustee Area 1, Jim Reardon was re-elected to Trustee Area 2 and Gary Pritchard to Trustee Area 5. Patricia Holloway was elected to her first term in office in Trustee Area 3. The newly elected were administered the Oath of Office by a person of their choosing. Quinn Darling, Student Advisor to the Board administered the oath for Amy Hanacek. James Holloway administered the oath for his wife Patricia Holloway, and Orange County District Attorney Tony Rackauckas administered the oath for Gary Pritchard and Jim Reardon.

"Serving our students and families is truly an honor," McNicholas said. "Our role as Trustees is to ensure our students have the best educational opportunities possible and I am looking forward to continuing our work in 2017."

The next Board of Trustee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 25 at 7:00 p.m. at the District's Education Center located at 33122 Valle Road in the city of San Juan Capistrano.

Important Dates:

| January 12, | Special Education CAC Meeting | 9:30 a.m. District Office-Board Room |
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| January 13, | CUCPTSA Advocacy Meeting | 9:00 a.m. Eisenhower Room District |
| January 16 | Dr. Martin Luther King Day | NO SCHOOL |
| January 18 | Fourth District Advocacy Forum | 9:30-11:30 TBD |
| January 25 | CUSD School Board Meeting | District Office- Board Room |
| January 26 | Reflections Gallery Night | 6:00-8:00 p.m. District Office |
| February 3 | Sacramento Safari Orientation | 9:00 a.m. Fountain Valley School District |
| February 27- | 28 Sacramento Safari | Sacramento |