
CTA Liaison News



By CTA Vice President Dean E. Vogel and Secretary-Treasurer Gail Mendes

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PTA Presidents Concerned About Devastating Effects of Budget Cuts

District Presidents of the California State Parents Teachers Association expressed their concerns at the organization's March 12 convening about the harsh impact of state education cuts on their local school districts.

During the meeting, CTA Liaisons reported on the statewide Education Coalition statement calling on the governor and legislature to stop breaking their promises to California students. The Coalition has focused on the fact that despite an agreement on school funding reached earlier this year, the governor has proposed additional cuts of about \$2.4 billion. These additional cuts, coming on top of more than \$17 billion already slashed from public schools, would result in even more students being jammed into overcrowded classrooms, they reported. The state PTA also heard reports on the statewide Day of Action events that took place on March 4 to protest education cuts.

The organization is also working to qualify an initiative, "the Local Control of Local Classrooms Funding Act," that would lower the margin required for passage of parcel taxes for schools from the current two-thirds to just 55%.

The California State Parents Teachers Association website is www.capta.org.

CTA's Liaisons to the California State Parents Teachers Association are Greg Bonaccorsi and Les Nakasaki.

Close-up

CTA Higher Education Liaisons Work To Support Community Colleges

CTA Liaisons work closely with the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges and the Chancellor's Consultation Council.

The 17-members of the Board of Governors are appointed by the governor. They are responsible for

setting policy for and guiding the operation of the state's 72 community college districts and 110 community colleges. Members of the Board work with state and federal officials on issues affecting the institutions and their students.

Among other things, the Board hires the Chancellor.

The system's shared governance process includes locally elected community college district boards of trustees that oversee the operation of local college districts.

In 1988, the Board adopted a "consultation process" that brings together 18 organizations — including representatives of CTA's Community College Association — for monthly meetings with the Chancellor. The purpose of the Chancellor's Consultation Council, which is the embodiment of the process, is to strengthen communications and policy review throughout the statewide system. The Consultation Council discusses policy, raises issues, and seeks consensus on answers to challenges facing the system.

Recently, faculty representatives used the consultation process to raise concerns about an agreement reached by the Chancellor's office with Kaplan University. The agreement allows community college students to take courses at Kaplan and then transfer to the institutions. Many groups on the Consultation Council have expressed concerns that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) makes a direct link between the community colleges and a for-profit educational entity that will be providing direct services to community college students who should be receiving services from their local community colleges. Further, the agreement masks the real issue: state funding has fallen far below the amounts needed to support the community colleges' mission and to allow all students to enroll in the courses they need.

The web site for both the Community College Board of Governors and the Chancellor's Consultation Council is www.cccco.edu/.

CTA's Liaisons to the Board of Governors and the Chancellor's Consultation Council are CTA/Community College Association President Ron Norton Reel and Vice President Lynette Nyaggah.

Little Hoover Commission Hears Calls for More Accountability for Charters

The Little Hoover Commission, a state watchdog or oversight agency, held a hearing in February on charter schools. During the hearing, CTA representatives made the case that state law needs to be changed to provide more transparency and academic accountability at charter schools. In particular, CTA has been working to ensure that charter schools cater to student populations that reflect those in the authorizing school district. CTA is also pressing for state law changes to ensure that only locally elected and accountable school boards can authorize charter institutions.

The Little Hoover Commission's web site is www.lhc.ca.gov/lhc.html.

CTA's Liaisons to the Little Hoover Commission are Jeff Daucher, Ellen Gutierrez, and Claudia Sandberg-Larsen.

Californians Together Presses for Positive Changes in Federal Law

Californians Together: a Round Table for Quality Education (CALTOG) is urging school supporters to let members of Congress know the importance of securing positive changes to federal law as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In fact, the organization is publicizing the Congressional e-mail address where interested individuals may provide their input on the education law: eseacomments@mail.house.gov.

Californians Together's web site is www.Californianstogether.org

CTA's Liaisons to Californians Together are Nancy Hofrock and Kathy Reyes.

Energy Commission Has Green Information for Public Schools

The California Energy Commission has both instructional materials on energy conservation and information about making schools "greener." For more information, check the Commission's website at www.energy.ca.gov.

CTA's Liaison to the California Energy Commission is Carolyn Vaughn.

Procrastinators: It's Not Too Late to Count

While April 1 was "Census Count" Day and U.S. residents were encouraged to return their Census forms by that date, the U.S. Census Bureau, CTA and its California Complete Count partners are urging anyone who hasn't completed and returned the form to do so now. The Census will continue its efforts to count every resident of California and the United State — regardless of their immigration status — through June 30.

Under federal law, every person is required to participate in the count, and the results are very important to California and our public schools. For every Californian counted, the state will receive at least \$1400 per year every year for the next decade in federal appropriations. Those funds represent a significant share of the \$400 billion in federal funds to be distributed every year.

The results of the count will also determine how many members of the House of Representatives each state will have. A full count could earn California additional representatives in Congress. Some other important points: The amount of federal funding for public education — including Title 1 appropriations — is tied to the Census. Other federal funding for health and social service programs for children is also Census dependent.

For more information, go to the CTA web page (cta.org) and check out the *CTA Up for the Count publication*. It will link you to state-approved lesson plans on the Census and other materials that can help you get the messages to students and their parents.

(The summaries include statements made at agency meetings and do not necessarily reflect CTA's policies or views.) *The Liaison News* is a publication of the Governmental Relations Division of the California Teachers Association/NEA, 1118 10th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, 916/325-1500, ©copyright 2010.

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