

SACRAMENTO UPDATE

CALIFORNIA
STATE PTA

INCLUDING

THE D.C.
CORNER



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What A Difference a Year Makes! Governor Admits He Made Mistakes in 2005

Proposition 76 Defeated in Special Election

By the largest margin of any of the Governor-sponsored initiatives, Proposition 76 was soundly defeated in the November Special Election. Only 37.6% of voters supported the initiative which would not only have threatened funding to vital public services and the guaranteed minimum funding to public education under Proposition 98, but would also have allowed the governor unprecedented power to override state laws with *no* public oversight.

Because of our long history of support for Proposition 98, the California State PTA recognized that we had to take a leading role to defeat Proposition 76. President Brenda Davis signed the argument against Proposition 76, which appeared in the *Official Voter Information Guide*, to kick off our state-wide effort for the defeat of this measure.

Congratulations and thanks to all the PTA members in California who worked hard to defeat Proposition 76. Your grassroots efforts are very much appreciated.

The State of the State

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger gave his third annual State-of-the-State address in

the State Capitol on Thursday, January 5, 2006. In what appeared to be a conciliatory mood, the governor admitted that he had made a mistake in not listening to the voice of the people telling him they opposed the special election and that he is now prepared to learn from his mistakes. He indicated that he was ready to work with the Legislature to address California's problems and asked for help in creating new ways to approach the challenges.

The Governor proposed a huge investment in infrastructure for California including a proposed 2,000 new small K-12 schools with 40,000 new classrooms and the modernization of another 140,000 classrooms.

In a meeting with members of the Education Coalition, including PTA, on Tuesday, January 3, the Governor indicated that his budget proposal will be a "starting point" that reflects his commitment to schools and that he wants to keep the dialog going in the weeks and months ahead as the Legislature begins to deliberate upon the proposed budget for 2006-07.

The Governor stated that he will propose fully funding the Proposition 98 guarantee at \$52.2 billion

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

for 06-07 and increasing the guarantee by \$428 million for Proposition 49 after school programs and \$1.673 billion for the 04-05 Maintenance Factor for K-14, a total increase of \$4.3 billion.

Included in the Governor's priorities for the increased funds are teacher/principal training and recruitment in hard to staff schools and subjects (math, science, special education), a third year of BTSA for low performing schools, \$100 million for music and art programs in K-8, \$85 million for physical education programs and \$20 million for California High School Exit Exam assistance

Unfortunately, the Governor is not proposing a budget that recognizes the agreement made with the Education Coalition on December 22, 2003, and ratified by the Legislature in 2004. The budget will still fall short of the needs of the children of California. We look forward to working with the Governor and the Legislature in the months to come.

Approval of the State Budget

The California Constitution requires that by January 10 each year, the Governor must submit to the Legislature a budget for the ensuing fiscal year. The budget must include "itemized statements for recommended state expenditures and estimated state revenues." The Constitution further states that the budget proposal must be immediately introduced in each house and passed by the Legislature by June 15 of each year. Once the Legislature passes the budget, it is returned to the Governor, who is required to sign the Budget Act by July 1. The bill is an urgency measure, which means it become law as soon as the Governor signs it.

Budget Process Timeline

July 9-September 15

Department directors and agency heads initiate detailed reviews and develop proposals for specific requests for each program. These requests are then sent to the Department of Finance for review.

October- January 10

The Governor evaluates the requests as reviewed by the Department of Finance and sends his proposed budget to the Legislature.

January-February

The budget proposal is introduced in both the Assembly and the Senate as identical budget bills. The Legislative Analyst prepares an extensive analysis of the Budget Bill.

March – May

The Budget Bill is sent from each house to the respective budget committee. The bill is broken down by subject and assigned to appropriate subcommittees. After completion of the hearings,

each subcommittee votes and sends its report to the full budget committee.

Mid May

About May 15, the Governor's office releases revised revenue forecast as an expenditure plan for the State, called the "May Revise."

May-June 15

The budget committee of each house considers the subcommittees' reports and sends a revised Budget Bill to the floor for evaluation by the full body. Each house votes on its version of the Budget Bill. Differences between the Assembly and Senate versions of the Budget Bill are worked out in a Joint Conference Committee. A single version of the Budget Bill is sent to both houses. The Budget Act must be passed by a two-third vote of both houses of the Legislature.

June 15-July 1

The Governor receives the Budget Bill and has until July 1, the start of the fiscal year, to sign or veto the Budget Bill.

*Nancy Adalian
Director of Legislation*

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Director of Legislation.....Nancy Adalian
Sacramento Update Editor.....Cecelia Mansfield
 Education Advocate.....Pat Dingsdale
 Education Advocate.....Carol Kocivar
 Education Advocate.....Cecelia Mansfield
 Community Concerns Advocate.....Debbie Look
 Health Advocate.....Kathy Moffat
 Parent Involvement Advocate.....Vicky Reinke
 Federal Advocate.....Barbara Paxton
 Consultant.....Michael Butler
 Consultant..... Betty DeFea

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Preschool Initiative Likely to Qualify for June 2006 Ballot

Preschool for All has gathered enough signatures to qualify an initiative, the *Preschool for All Act* for the June 2006 statewide ballot. The campaign has gathered a million signatures while only 598,105 are required. Once the signatures are verified the initiative will be officially ready to be placed on the ballot.

Supporters will be asking voters to approve a measure that will establish a constitutional entitlement to statewide voluntary preschool services for all children one year prior to entering kindergarten and approve a tax increase to the wealthiest 1% of California residence to fund this measure.

Many studies have been done showing the importance of a quality preschool experience for children prior to entering kindergarten. A child who attends a quality preschool program are more likely to become good readers in elementary school and less likely to be placed in special education or held back a grade. A recent RAND Corp. study showed a return on investment of \$2.62 for every dollar invested in quality preschool. There are certainly many reasons why establishing a quality preschool program in California for all 4 year olds is important.

While there is great support for preschool and many see the benefits for our children who attend preschool there are still concerns. Some wonder if we should fix the K-12 system before we add another program. Some ask if California can afford to do this at this time while some oppose increased taxes on California residence. Others ask if they will have a choice in where their child attends preschool. There will be great debate on what is the right thing for California. It will be up to the voters to make that final determination. To find out more visit the Pre-

school California website:
www.preschoolcalifornia.org

Vicky Reinke
 Parent Involvement Advocate

Status of PTA Sponsored Legislation, SB 660 (Kuehl)

As many of you know, State PTA-sponsored **SB 660 (Kuehl)** has been working its way through the legislature. SB 660 would require a school to notify parents before allowing police to interrogate their child on campus. The bill contains exceptions, for example in cases of emergency, or when the presence of a parent might pose a threat to the child.

SB 660 has passed all the Senate committee and floor votes, and has also passed the Assembly Education Committee. The next step for the bill will be a vote in the Assembly. This will be taken some time before August – exactly when is not known right now. It is very important that all State PTA members and leaders let their local Assemblymembers know the importance of this bill. Every elected official has a special obligation to their own constituents, and when constituents speak, the official listens - - and remembers.

SB 660 needs your grassroots advocacy. Plan to contact your Assembly representative with a contingent of fellow PTA leaders and explain how you feel about parental involvement in situations such as an interrogation by law enforcement. In order to be well-versed enough to be a good advocate, you need to be sure you are very familiar with the bill. You can read the whole text of the bill by going to the following web address: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov> and clicking on Bill Information. Then just follow the prompts until you get the Bill Text.

It is important to remember that a police officer must get your consent as a parent to question your child at home. Also, if a child is approached by police for questioning on the street, it is the child's prerogative to walk away or to decline to speak to the officer. But at school, the child is given no choice in the matter, and current law gives parents no opportunity to grant permission, to be present, or even to be informed of the interrogation. This is why we need to act to let lawmakers know about SB 660, and that parents want and need to be involved with their children if such a situation should arise.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

If you have had an experience with a child being interrogated at school and would like to share it in our advocacy efforts, please call the Sacramento office. These true life experiences are very helpful in educating legislators about the need for SB 660.

Thank you all for being advocates for children.

*Kathy Moffat
Legislative Advocate*

News on Impact of 2004 Class Size Reduction Law

The first report showing the impact of the new Class Size Reduction law SB 311 indicates that more than 93 percent of K-3 students participated in the Class Size Reduction program in California during 2004-05, about the same level as the prior year.

Class Size Reduction (CSR) is an incentive program that provides additional funding for maintaining small class size in grades K-3. Findings for 2004-05 indicate participation in the program has remained steady for the past two years, reversing a trend of slight decline.

Based on data released by the California Department of Education:

Combination Classes - The number of reported combination classes continues to drop, by almost 11 per cent since last year. The number of combination classes is now below the number reported in 1996 when the program began. State-wide, the percentage of combination classes is now approximately 7 per cent. In 2004-05, combination classes totaled 6,915 (out of a total of 94,044 classes in CSR.) This is a drop of 840 classes from the prior year. In 1996, when CSR was first introduced, the number of combination classes was 7,289 out of a total of 51,612 CSR classes, for a percentage of 14 per cent.

Average Class Size Under SB 311 - The average class size in the 2004-05 school year was 19, a slight decrease from the prior year average of 19.11. In 2002-03 and 2001-02, the average size was 18.96.

Participation Under SB 311 - The total number of local agencies participating increased in 2004-5, jumping to 1,065 from 1013 in the prior year. The increase reflects the number of charter schools participating independently from their school districts. In 2004-05, 184 charter schools participated independently compared to 131 in the prior year. In 2004-05, 10 districts out of 891

eligible did not participate. In the prior year, 13 districts out of 895 eligible failed to participate. **SB 311 Penalty Changes** - Under this new law and through the 2008-09 school year, the funding penalty for exceeding the average class size of 20.4 is calculated on a sliding scale.

- ✓ Classes of 20.45 to 20.94 will receive \$15,472 in 2005-06 (80% of full funding).
- ✓ Classes of 20.95 to 21.44 will receive \$11,604 in 2005-06 (60% of full funding).
- ✓ Classes of 21.45 to 21.84 will receive \$3,868 in 2005-06 (20% of full funding).
- ✓ Classes of 21.85 and over lose 100% (\$19,340 in 2005-06).
- ✓

Last year SB 311, which was strongly supported by PTA, made changes to the penalty provisions for exceeding the class size average of 20. Under prior law, schools lost ALL CSR funding for a classroom that exceeded the average of 20 students. Under SB 311, the funding penalty is calculated on a sliding cap, with schools keeping all of their CSR funds if they do not exceed the average of 20.4 students in a classroom. This change in the penalty provision was introduced to help schools respond to minor fluctuations in school population during the year. It was also introduced to address a small decline in participation in the program.

The California State PTA has been the leading advocate for small class size based on extensive research of class size reduction programs throughout the country. For young students to benefit from the findings about small classes, the accumulated body of research indicates that the actual class size in grades K-3 must be fewer than 20 pupils. More information is available at on the www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cs/k3/participationdata.asp.

*Carol Kocivar
Education Advocate*

Landmark Health Legislation Takes Effect

On January first of this year, several very important health-related bills strongly supported by PTA became law. Among them are:

- AB 689 (Nava) regarding the adoption of nutrition and physical activity curriculum.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

- SB 12 (Escutia) regarding the sale of junk food and beverages at school.
- SB 37 (Speier) regarding prohibited substances.
- SB 965 (Escutia) regarding the sale of soda at school.

AB 689 (Nava) requires that by March 1, 2008, the State Board of Education adopt content standards that will provide a framework for instruction in the area of health education, realizing a goal that PTA has been working toward for quite some time.

SB 12 (Escutia) requires that commencing on July 1, 2007, no junk food may be sold at elementary, middle, junior high, or high schools in California during the time frame from one half hour prior to and one half hour following the conclusion of the school day. This, also, is a goal that PTA has supported and worked for over the course of several years.

SB 37 (Speier) requires that as of December 31, 2008, high school coaches in California complete a coaching education program that contains instruction on the harmful effects of anabolic steroids and various performance-enhancing dietary supplements on teenagers. Additionally, it requires CIF to amend its constitution and bylaws to prohibit the use of steroids (except by prescription) and prohibited dietary supplements by any pupil participating in interscholastic high school sports. The new law also prohibits any marketing or sale of any performance enhancing dietary supplement on school campuses. Senator Speier has been working for three years to achieve legislation addressing this serious problem among high school athletes, and this bill is the successful culmination of those efforts.

SB 965 (Escutia) puts new restrictions on the sale of non-nutritional beverages at schools in California. In addition to the ban on sodas and sweetened drinks at elementary, middle, and junior high schools, this law institutes a phased-in restriction of such sales at the high schools. By July 1, 2007, no more than 50% of drinks offered for sale at high schools during the school day may be soda and sweetened drinks. By July 1, 2009, no such beverages will be allowed to be sold at high schools during the school day. Electrolyte replacement beverages with less than a specified amount of sweetener are permitted.

These new measures will have a profound impact on the health and well being of California's children and youth. PTA is proud to have been a part of putting this much-needed legislation in place.

*Kathy Moffat
Health Advocate*

Community Concerns Bills Signed by Governor

Since January 1, 2001 California law has allowed the parent of a newborn infant to legally surrender their baby, anonymously and without prosecution, to any employee at a hospital emergency room or other designated safe haven. Since this law went into effect, 85 babies have been safely surrendered who might otherwise have been abandoned. This law was due to expire in 2006 but has now been extended indefinitely through the passage of **SB 116 (Dutton)** Child Abandonment. California State PTA strongly supported this bill. President, Brenda Davis, wrote to the Governor in September urging him to support this bill to protect the lives of children.

Members of California State PTA have raised concerns about the effects on children of playing the increasingly violent video games available on the market today. Access to these violent video games for young children will now be restricted due to passage of **AB 1179 (Yee)** SUPPORT, Violent Video Games. As of January 1, 2006 violent video games will be labeled as such and the sale of these games to minors will be prohibited. Violent video games are defined as those games, which include killing, maiming, dismembering, or sexually assaulting an image of a human being. Violators will be liable up to \$1,000 for each violation. Since this bill was passed, a federal judge has blocked the implementation of the new state law until a lawsuit brought by the video game industry is resolved. The lawsuit alleges that the law violates the free speech rights of minors.

ACR 2 (Cohn) SUPPORT proclaimed October 2005 Domestic Violence Awareness Month. California State PTA agreed that this serious issue warrants an increased level of awareness.

Crimes committed using assault weapons are now subject to separate offences for each assault weapon involved due to passage of **AB 88 (Koretz)** SUPPORT, Assault Weapons. One of the objects of PTA is to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth. Since there is no reasonable way to protect our children from an individual using a military assault-type weapon with the intent to kill, society must control the access to these weapons. PTA believes that this bill is a step towards providing the protection that is needed to safeguard the children and youth.

*Debbie Look
Community Concerns Advocate*

Legislature Reconvenes Focus Is On 2-Year bills

The second year of the 2005-06 Legislative session (is underway. The focus during January will be on the “two-year” bills that failed to meet deadlines to continue moving through the legislative process last year.

Only **AB 1196 (Coto) SUPPORT**, which would establish a State Seal of Biliteracy to be awarded to students who have mastered speaking, reading and writing skills in one or more languages in addition to English has scheduled for hearing. **AB 1196** was heard in the Senate Education Committee on January 12, where it passed by a vote of 7 to 3.

Other important two-year bills, including **SB 767 (Romero) OPPOSE**, which would give control of schools in Los Angeles Unified School District to the mayor of the City of Los Angeles, and **SB 428 (Scott) WATCH**, which proposes to repeal the California Basic Educational Skills Test as a requirement for earning a teaching credential in California, have not yet been scheduled for hearing.

Student assessment will continue to be a priority in this session, particularly efforts to provide alternatives to the California High School Exit Exam for the Class of 2006.

*Cecelia Mansfield
Pat Dingsdale
Education Advocate*

DC Corner

Senate Bill 946, introduced by Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon in April '05, amends the Communications Act of 1934 to require multichannel video programming distributors (cable/satellite) to provide a “kid-friendly” tier of programming. Studies from the American Psychological Society and the Kaiser Family Foundation have found that viewing television programs with “obscene, indecent, violent or sexual content” has adverse effects on children. Efforts to limit the exposure of children to harmful television content are hampered because Federal regulatory agencies have not had the authority to require cable and satellite providers to offer child-friendly tiers of programs. Additional studies indicate that 85% of American households receive television programming via cable or satellite providers. S.946 attempts to offer parents more effective ways to limit the exposure of children to harmful content through alternative, child-friendly tiers of programs

by requiring each multichannel video programming distributor to provide, in their monthly statement of charges, instructions for how to block any channel whose content a subscriber finds objectionable. If enacted, the bill imposes a civil penalty of up to \$500,000 per day for failure to comply. The bill is currently in the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. A copy of the bill may be assessed at www.Thomas.loc.gov.

While aware of S.946, National PTA has taken no position on it. They have instead, been working with The Children’s Media Policy Coalition to persuade the cable and satellite providers to self-regulate their content. National PTA believes that regulations could make some valuable children’s programming too costly if placed in their own tier or purchased ala carte. National PTA is working with the Coalition and the industry to develop a more detailed program rating system giving parents more information upon which to make a decision on programming choices, projection of each program’s rating on screen throughout the program and parent-friendly information on how to block objectionable programming.

To that end the Coalition and the industry reached an agreement to ensure more options in children’s **educational** programming and increased protection from advertising. The agreement awaits FCC adoption of the agreement and regulations. If, however, the Commission has not done so by March 1, 2006, the industry parties have agreed to voluntarily comply with the proposal. The media companies involved in the agreement are Viacom, The Walt Disney Company, Fox Entertainment Group, NBC Universal, Time Warner, 4Kids Entertainment, the Association of National Advertisers, and Discovery Communications. While these efforts do not address all the concerns expressed in S. 946, it does show willingness on the industries’ part to cooperate with consumer concerns.

*Barbara Paxton
Federal Advocate*

**Register By February 10 for
the 2006 California State
PTA Legislation Conference
Sacramento - March 19-21**