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Advocacy news from the California State PTA Legislation Team

To learn more about the California State PTA positions on bills currently before the California Legislature, click [HERE](#).

Taking Action for California Children and Families

The legislative session recently came to a close with Governor Brown signing or vetoing bills, and now attention has turned to the November 2016 election and the large number of ballot initiatives before the electorate. Please see [capta.org](#) for PTA's position on key ballot measures.

One of PTA's top advocacy goals this legislative session was parent and family engagement. PTA-sponsored [Assembly Bill 2680](#) (Bonilla) garnered bipartisan support; however, potential costs caused the bill to be held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. We are pleased that, through discussions with the Governor's Office and with state policymakers, PTA has raised the visibility of authentic parent and family engagement in our children's educations and futures. This work now continues in our work with the California State Board of Education and the implementation of parent-engagement performance standards under [LCFF/LCAP](#).

Studies Show Students' School Success Is Strongly Linked with Their Health

By California State PTA Health Advocate Kathy Rabun

This term, the Health Commission worked on bills that address basic supports necessary for children to be healthy and safe. These needs are as basic as clean and safe drinking water, clean and healthy air to breathe, nutritious food to fuel their bodies, effective medications, and wellness and mental-health support.

Governor Brown signed many of the bills supported by California State PTA this year and in 2015 during California's two-year legislative session, including:

- [AB 216](#) (C. Garcia) Product Sales to Minors: Vapor Products -- Prohibits the sale of any "vaping" devices to a person under 18 years of age
- [AB 329](#) (Weber) Pupil Instruction: Sexual Health Education – Revises and recasts some provisions of current law related to sexual-health education
- [AB 496](#) (Rendon) Pupil Nutrition: Fresh Drinking Water: Funding -- Authorizes the state to allocate funds to school districts for purposes of providing students with better access to drinking water and requires the California Department of Education to provide districts with information about available sources of funding for school water quality and infrastructure

- [AB 1808](#) (Wood) Minors: Mental Health Treatment or Counseling Services -- Enlarges the pool of mental-health and counseling professionals who can support minors 12 years of age or older who seek services
- [SB 27](#) (Hill) Livestock: Use of Antimicrobial Drugs -- Beginning Jan. 1, 2018, prohibits the administration of certain drugs to livestock unless ordered by a licensed veterinarian; prohibits the administration of such drugs to livestock solely for purposes of promoting weight gain or improving feed efficiency
- [SB 277](#) (Pan) Public Health: Vaccinations -- Eliminates the exemption from immunization based upon personal beliefs
- [SB 1229](#) (Jackson) Home-Generated Pharmaceutical Waste: Secure Drug Take-Back Bins -- Protects organizations that maintain secure drug take-back bins on their premises from specific civil or criminal actions, provided that the organization acts in good faith and not for compensation
- [SB 1383](#) (Lara) Short-Lived Climate Pollutants: Methane Emissions: Dairy and Livestock: Organic Waste: Landfills -- Requires the state to approve and begin implementing a comprehensive strategy to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants based on specified targets; establishes specified targets for reducing organic waste in landfills.

For more information, please contact Health Advocate Kathy Rabun at krabun@capta.org.

AB 934: A Valiant Attempt to Address Teacher Evaluation, Tenure and Dismissal

By California State PTA Education Advocate Donna Artukovic

Teacher tenure, evaluation and dismissal have been contentious matters in California for several years, with no resolution in sight, despite repeated attempts by the Legislature, and in the courts, that have failed to change current law, which among other things grants tenure (permanent status) to most teachers after two years and requires that layoffs be based on seniority, not effectiveness.

Last year, [SB 499](#) (Liu) and [AB 575](#) (O'Donnell) were offered as solutions to clarify and reform areas of teacher effectiveness. Both bills failed as teacher-effectiveness bills.

This year, another bill -- [AB 934](#) (Bonilla) -- made a valiant attempt to reconcile teachers' and reform groups' concerns on these issues. The bill in its amended form focused on training for principals who evaluate teachers, lengthening the probationary period from two to three years, and giving teachers more negotiating power around local dismissal procedures.

The California Teachers Association (CTA) opposed this bill from its inception and remained opposed, even after significant amendments. CTA was against lengthening the probationary period allowed prior to a teacher receiving tenure.

AB 934 also was opposed, but for the opposite reasons, by education-reform groups that felt that the bill did not go far enough. Among those were plaintiffs in the *Vergara* lawsuit, who attempted to address the same issues through the courts. They wanted to significantly change the tenure and dismissal process by making the probationary period longer, and by requiring that layoffs be based on effectiveness, not seniority. Their belief is that students -- especially from low-income areas -- are harmed by the current teacher protections.

The *Vergara* plaintiffs had been initially successful suing to overturn tenure and dismissal processes in the California Superior Court, only to have the decision overturned by the California Court of Appeals. In August, the California Supreme Court refused to hear the case, thus upholding the lower court's decision.

California State PTA supported the June 22 amended version of AB 934. Despite energetic lobbying, **AB 934** was voted down in the Senate Education Committee in June. California State PTA President Justine Fischer said, "PTA would like to thank Assemblywoman Bonilla for her fearless leadership and measured efforts on this very reasonable bill, which would have helped so many students across our state. While we are certainly disappointed with the outcome of today's hearing, **AB 934** shined a light on an ongoing problem that will hopefully be revisited next year."

Next year... Will a new bill be coming forth? Will the two opposing groups find agreement? Stay tuned!

For more information on this legislation, contact Education Advocate Donna Artukovic at dartukovic@capta.org.

Keeping Watch on Washington, D.C.

By California State PTA Director of Legislation Heidi Brewington

A number of activities related to federal law are worth paying attention to this fall.

ESSA Implementation Is Just Beginning

Signed into law December 2015, the [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) was designed to give states more flexibility in terms of accountability and systems of support. In California, this flexibility aligns with current reforms being implemented as part of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).

ESSA specifically calls for parents to be meaningfully involved and consulted in the development of state and school-district education plans. These plans provide the framework for how states and school districts will deliver services to public-school students. The enactment of ESSA gives California the opportunity to streamline local, state and federal requirements into a single, coherent system for planning, accountability and improvement. The goal is for each part of the emerging system to align with the LCFF to support continuous learning, equity and transparency. As ESSA implementation gets underway, 2016-17 will be a year of transition. The California Department of Education (CDE) has posted information about the transition plan at www.cde.ca.gov/essa.

The U.S. Department of Education is continuing to develop regulations related to ESSA and all interested members of the public can review the proposed regulations and participate in the public-comment process. Links to proposed regulations and related materials can be found on the CDE website. Information also is available from National PTA at www.pta.org/essa.

For example, one area of interest and some disagreement relates to "Title I - Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged-Supplement Not Supplant." The law requires that states and districts use Title I funds to "supplement the funds that would, in the absence of such Federal Funds, be made available from State and Local sources for the education of students

participating in programs assisted under this part, and not to supplant such funds.” There is disagreement on how this provision should be interpreted and what role the Education Department should have in implementing it.

Stakeholders are encouraged to submit comments on or before **Nov. 7, 2016**. The federal e-rulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/> provides instructions and forms for doing this.

National PTA Has Many Advocacy Goals

A key priority for National PTA is securing federal investment in the Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC) Grant Program. These grants provide states and districts with financial resources to increase family engagement in education to support student success. National PTA is continuing to call on Congress to adequately fund the SFEC Grant Program for fiscal year 2017.

National PTA's 2016 Public Policy Agenda focuses on a number of policy areas, including:

- Elementary and Secondary Education
- Special Education
- Federal Investments in Education
- Early Learning and Childhood Education
- Child Health and Safety
- Gun Safety and Violence Prevention
- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
- Education Technology and Student Data Privacy
- Postsecondary Access and Opportunity

National PTA stays abreast of specific federal bills as they move through. For example, the House of Representatives recently voted yes on [HR5963](#): To Reauthorize and Improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, and for Other Purposes. This bill was a bipartisan effort to prevent children and youth from entering the juvenile-justice system as well as better protect and support those currently in the system. The Senate will vote on this next.

When the new Congress convenes in 2017, they will have reauthorization of the Higher Education Act to look at as well as reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the special-education law, and other key legislation.

For more information about these bills, contact Federal Advocate Heidi Brewington at hbrewington@capta.org.

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