

CUCPTSA Legislation Briefs – May 2010

LOCAL

CUSD Budget: the budget deficit for the 2010/2011 school year is approximately \$34 million. In February, staff held a budget workshop to review core programs, determine priorities, and look for ways to maximize efficiency. The results were presented at the April 13 Board meeting and cost savings or revenue opportunities of \$5.5 to \$5.9 million were identified.

Negotiations (PTA REMAINS NEUTRAL AT ALL TIMES):

CUEA (Teachers) – On April 26, a tentative agreement was reached between CUSD and CUEA to address items in the resolution passed by the CUSD Board of Trustees on March 31. Ratification elections by CUEA members at school sites are scheduled for May 12 and 13.

Superintendent Search Process: The Board of Trustees is working to hire a permanent superintendent. On April 16 an interview workshop was held for the trustees and a confidential slate of candidates was presented. Interviews with the candidates were held the week of April 19 and interviews with two finalists were held the week of April 26. The finalist was identified by the Board of Trustees on May 3, pending a visit to the finalist's home district and a reference check. The public announcement could be made at the May 11 Board meeting.

STATE

State Budget Update: The projected state deficit for the upcoming fiscal year is about \$20 billion. The governor's May Revision of the 2010/11 Budget due on May 14. In his January proposal for 2010/11, the governor proposed cutting K-12 Education \$2.5 billion on top of cuts made in the current fiscal year.

California State Primary – June 8th: Candidates are competing in races for statewide offices, U.S. Senate and Congress, and county offices. Voters will also see five statewide propositions on the ballot.

LAO Survey on School District Finance and Flexibility: The LAO surveyed public school districts in California to see how they are responding to the current budget situation. In particular, they asked districts to report on the newly granted flexibility. The survey also asked districts to report how they were using federal stimulus funding. The LAO found that categorical flexibility is having a positive impact on local decision making and that the majority of districts generally appear to be using freed-up categorical funds to support core classroom instruction. Also, roughly two-thirds of the federal stimulus funds were used to minimize teacher layoffs.

Lieutenant Governor sworn in: Senator Maldonado was sworn in on April 27th as the new lieutenant governor of California. Governor Schwarzenegger has called an August 17 special election to fill his seat in Santa Maria.

Governance Reform: Assembly Member Mike Feuer (D-Los Angeles) and Senator Mark DeSaulnier (D – Concord), Chairs of the Assembly Select Committee on Improving State Government, recently announced a major package of reforms based on ideas from the bipartisan good government group California Forward.

Common Core Standards: The decision on whether California should join other states in adopting common-core standards in Math and English will have a monumental impact on K-12 education. Neither the Governor nor the Legislature has made any appointments to the 21-member commission that is supposed to make the recommendation on common core to the State Board of Education by July 15.

FEDERAL

Race To The Top Update: The California Department of Education announced on April 30 that California will apply for up to \$700 million in federal funds during Phase 2 of the Federal Race to the Top (RTTT) program. For this application, the state has asked six school districts to take the lead in formulating a detailed reform plan for the application. The RTTT Phase 2 application is due June 1, 2010.

Proposed Education Stimulus Fund: In December, the House passed an education stimulus fund to save education jobs. The Senate is currently considering a similar education stimulus bill, (Keep Our Educators Working Act, Harkin, S. 3206) that would provide \$23 billion dollars in federal stimulus funds to save and restore some 300,000 jobs in K-12 schools. California would receive an estimated \$2.5 to \$3.0 billion if passed.

ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) Reauthorization Update: The U.S. Department of Education has released a series of documents containing research to support the administration's plan for ESEA Reauthorization. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan spoke before the Council for Exceptional Children in April to discuss the importance of aligning ESEA with IDEA and measuring student growth in accountability systems.

Federal Budget Hearings: Secretary of Education Arne Duncan testified before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on April 14 to discuss the FY2011 proposed education budget. Duncan discussed the substantial budget cuts that schools districts are facing, and requested support for an education stimulus jobs fund as well as support for the administration's education programs.