

CUCPTSA Legislation Newsletter – January 2009 Brief version

EXCITING NEWS...

National PTA selected our CUCPTSA Legislation Team, as this year's winner of the National PTA Outstanding Advocacy Award.

National PTA selected Kim Anderson as the first ever recipient of the Outstanding Advocate of the Year Award.

Our Legislation Team will receive three all-expense paid trips to the 2009 National Legislative Conference and be recognized at an awards ceremony on Capitol Hill on March 12, as well as \$500 to put towards our advocacy efforts.

LOCAL

1/6/09 Special CUSD Board meeting:

- 80 minutes of public input regarding Superintendent Carter; Board retreated to Closed Session; at approximately 11:45 pm, they announced they had voted 6-1 to put the Superintendent Carter on paid administrative leave.

1/12/09 CUSD Board meeting:

- Trustee Christensen spoke on behalf of all Board members regarding rumors:
 - *Trustees are micromanaging this district* – Not true.
 - *Trustees have chain meetings* – Not true.
 - *Trustees want to break the unions* - Not true.
 - *Trustees want to implement vouchers* – Not true.
 - *Trustees want to close down San Juan Hills HS* - Not true but they want to stop the large amount of money being spent on this location.

Mr. Christensen also said: they understand the frustration of the public; policy prevents them from speaking about employment issues; need to put politics aside and move forward..

Trustee Jack Brick made a statement sharing that he made a mistake when he voted to put Supt. Carter on paid administrative leave – he meant to vote “No.” Legal counsel would not allow him to do so the next day.

Highlights from the agenda items:

#13: Fiscal Audit – approved 7 – 0

#14: School Programs & Facilities – Lots of support to make S J Elem a K-8. Trustees requested that staff come back with other suggestions for Crown Valley (the suggestion was to turn it into a Continuation High School) at a Facilities workshop.

#15: Settlement Agreement between CUSD & Whispering Hills. They decided to keep it for further discussion.

#16: Consulting firm for cell tower facilities - Trustees concerned regarding safety of cell towers (unknown future health problems) near students. They decided to keep it for further discussion.

#17: School Calendar – Postponed until the next meeting.

#18: Surplus property - Approved 7-0

#19: Approved 7-0

The rest of the agenda (Items 20 - 26E) was postponed until the next meeting.

STATE

- In the past two months, budget plans were proposed by the Democrats, Republicans, and Governor Schwarzenegger but the legislature has not been able to reach consensus and pass a budget package the governor is willing to sign. The Republicans stand firm in their promise to not raise taxes and Democrats are unwilling to balance the budget on cuts alone.

- The Governor's 2009-10 budget proposal closes a roughly \$42 billion budget deficit over the next 18 months and provides a \$2 billion reserve, relying on tax increases, spending cuts and borrowing. The actions proposed are to start now and continue into the 2009-10 budget year.
- The Governor's proposal contains **Revenue increases of \$14.8 billion, Borrowing of \$10.3 billion and Spending cuts of \$16.5 billion including a \$5.2 billion cut to K-12 Education and community colleges** to start with the current year and extend into 2009-10.
- CA. has a cash flow problem with estimates that the State will run out of cash by February.
- The California Teachers Association (CTA) has filed for a ballot initiative to increase the state sales tax by one cent in order to raise \$5-6 billion annually for K-14 Education. Several revenue proposals from the Governor and Republicans would need to go to the voters for approval. The LAO also suggests sending the Democrat's tax and fee proposals to the voters and recommends that an election should be scheduled as soon as possible (April or May).

FEDERAL

Post election analysis

Democrats post gains in both houses, take White House

- The Democratic Party increased their majority in the 2008 elections, winning the presidency and securing a total of 56 Senate seats and 257 House seats.

- ***Changes to congressional education committees***

It is unclear when the new Congress and White House will address education priorities, such as the reauthorization of NCLB.

National PTA – school modernization & new weekly update link. *Monthly PTA Takes Action: Federal Policy Update replaces This Week in Washington newsletter.* See www.pta.org to subscribe.

Obama's plans for education:

Secretary of Education

CEO of Chicago Public Schools Arne Duncan has been nominated as the new Secretary of Education. Duncan has been the Chicago Public Schools Chief since 2001.

Parent involvement

President-elect Obama has included parent engagement in his plans for education. He wants to collaborate with State leaders to create a meaningful parent report card that gives parents the information they need to help improve their child's performance each year and plan for post-secondary education.

The new administration wants to shift away from a zero tolerance model that forces children out of school for behavioral problems. The "Zero to Five" early childhood education plan would provide support to young children and their parents.

Quality Counts

The 13th edition of Quality Counts has been released by Education Week. Quality Counts 2009 is a comprehensive State by State analysis of student success. A special in-depth examination of the condition of the nation's 5.1 million English-language learners (ELL) in our schools was done. States receive an overall letter grade spanning six individual categories across two years of indicators. This year's installment provides updated 50-state information on policies and conditions in three areas:

1. Chance for Success Index- the role education plays from early childhood to the workforce
2. Transition and Alignment Policies- how well states smooth the transition from early education, college readiness to the workforce
3. School Finance. The three additional categories include K-12 achievement, standards, assessments, and accountability and the teaching profession

A few of the results nationally include a significant achievement gap between English-learners and all public school students:

- 9.6% of 4th and 8th grade ELL scored proficient in math as compared to 34.8% of students as a whole
- 5.6% of ELL are proficient in reading compared to the national average of 30% proficiency; States vary widely on making progress from 1.4% to 44.9% of which 1/4 of ELL are deemed not making progress

Thirty-three states set teacher standards for ELL, but only three states require all new teachers to show they are competent to teach ELL. These states are Arizona, Florida, and New York.

Grading Summary for California

Overall State Grade: C

Chance for Success: C

Transitions and Alignment: B-

School Finance: C

K-12 achievement: D

Standards, Assessments, and Accountability: A-

The Teaching Profession: C-