

**YPI CHARTER SCHOOLS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

April 23, 2018

The mission of YPI Charter Schools (YPICS) is to:

- *Prepare students for academic success in high school, as well as post-secondary education.*
- *Prepare students to be responsible and active participants in their community.*
- *Enable students to become life-long learners.*

Students at YPICS will become active citizens who characterize the ideals of a diverse and democratic society. Students will provide service to their community, take responsibility for their own learning, and develop the habits of mind and body that will empower them to be successful in high school and beyond.

CCSA:

The 25th Annual California Charter Schools Conference was held in San Diego from March 26 through March 28, 2018. Despite falling during the Spring Break observed by most school districts, the conference was well attended. The growth of the conference, and the exhibit hall, reflects the corresponding growth of the charter school movement and the significant clout that charter schools now have compared to their inception 25 years ago.

We are especially indebted to the work of CCSA to ensure our continued existence through their city, county, state and federal advocacy work.

Anyone interested in the future of public education in California should consider active involvement, engagement and participation in the state's premier charter school organization.

Making a Difference: Charter Schools Past, Present and Future

Held during the 25th Anniversary Plenary, 4:45pm - 7:00pm

Purpose:

This panel honored and reflected upon our past, acknowledged and celebrated our present and looked ahead to our future.

Panelists-In honor of Women's History Month All Women were selected to participate on the panel:

Dr. Jody Graf, Executive Director, Visions In Education

Yvette King-Berg, Executive Director, Youth Policy Institute Charter Schools

Sue Park, Head of School, Yu Ming Charter School

Frances Teso, Founder and CEO, Voices College-Bound Language Academies

Past: Panelist discussed their individual stories and experiences in the movement over the past 25 years. They shared about the one thing that has surprised them about the development of our movement and the one thing that they were most proud of as they reflected on the past.

Present: *Advocacy Questions*

In the words of Fredrick Douglass, “without struggle, there is no progress.” In recent years, charter schools have faced an increasing number of attacks. As we grow, so will the number/scale of attacks we will face. Advocacy has played a major role in our overcoming attacks in the past. Everyone here has faced their own battles as a charter school leader and I’m sure many of you have called upon your community to support your schools in some of these battles. What role do you see advocacy playing within the next 2-4 years for the charter movement? Do you believe that charter leaders and school communities integral to this advocacy? If so, how?

Hot Topics: Each panelist had to comment on a current, hot topic. Each will commented only on the topic assigned to them.

Potential issues to highlight:

- NAACP comes out against charter schools - CCSA’s response
- LAUSD Election Wins
- Non-Classroom based schools respond to new restrictions
- Richmond Moratorium - Charter schools respond

Future: In the last 25 years, charter schools have grown to over 630,000 students and 1,275 schools in California. We have seen tremendous success. What does your vision of the charter movement in California look like in the future? Where will we be? What will look and feel difference from now and what do we need to do to get there?

National:

From the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools –

National Alliance Response to the Latest Appropriations Bill

Washington, D.C. - Nina Rees, president and CEO of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools responds to the latest omnibus appropriations bill, which includes a 17 percent funding increase (\$58 million) for the Charter Schools Program (CSP) for fiscal year 2018

"The National Alliance is grateful that members of Congress from both sides of the aisle recognize the critical role charter schools play in strengthening public education in our country. The \$58 million increase brings total CSP funding to \$400 million--the highest level in the program’s 23-year history. Title I and IDEA are also critical sources of support for charter schools and we are thankful for the increased funding for these programs."

"We thank Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee Chairman Roy Blunt and House Subcommittee Chairman Tom Cole for their incredible support of charter schools and the students and families that they serve. We also applaud the leadership of President Trump and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos as well as subcommittee Ranking Members Senator Patty Murray and Representative Rosa DeLauro, who worked in a bipartisan way to support the CSP to provide high-quality education options for all students."

This increase is a clear acknowledgement of the success of the program and the need for additional funding to support the continued growth of public charter schools. There are a potential 5.3 million additional students that would attend a charter school today given the opportunity. We hope that this increase will help fill that gap.

State:

From School Services of California –

CalPERS Adopted Changes to Amortization Policy

At its February 2018 meeting, the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) Board took action to accept the staff recommendations for changing the amortization policy. This action did not result in further changes to the assumed rate of return on investments, which is being phased down from 7.5% to 7.0% over two years starting with the June 30, 2018, actuarial valuation. However, changes in other assumptions used for the actuarial valuations are expected to cause more volatility in employer contribution rates, starting with the June 30, 2017, actuarial valuation, which will be used to set the employer contribution rate for the 2018-19 fiscal year and estimated rates for the out years.

We anticipate that the employer contribution rate for 2018-19 will be finalized, and new projected rates for the out years will be made available, on or before the CalPERS Board meeting scheduled for May 14-16, 2018.

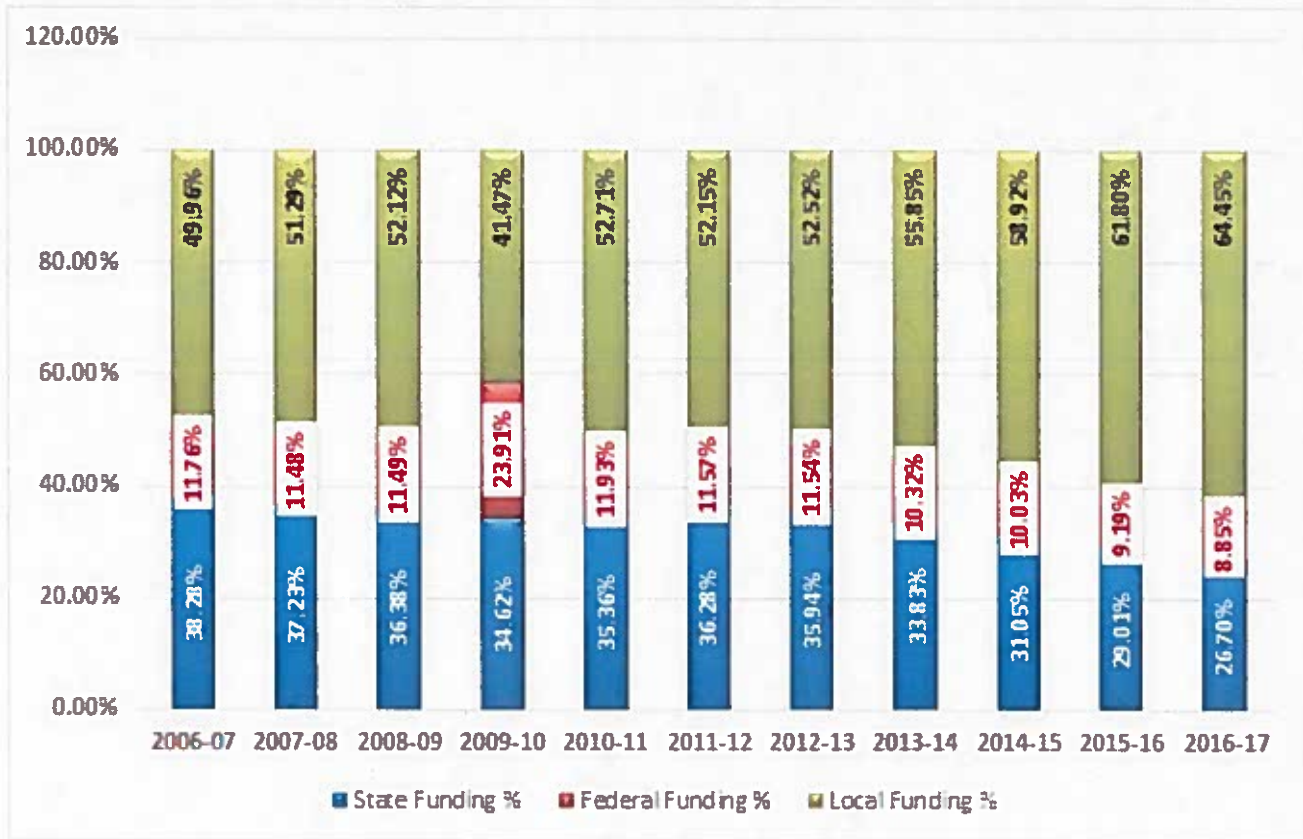
Special Education Costs: Local Contributions Exceed 60% of Total Funding in 2016-17

For decades, local educational agencies (LEAs) have been trying to help state legislators understand that funding adequacy is not the same thing as funding equity. While allowing much needed local control with the change to the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) was a generous move in the right direction, the funding needs of LEAs to provide high-quality programs and services to students with disabilities (SWD) was completely left out of the conversation.

It is important that LEAs recognize that the first funding to support all students comes from the LCFF, and it applies in the same manner as the primary funding source for SWDs. Supplementary funding for SWDs is provided through both federal and state funding sources, but the combined funding doesn't adequately address the requirements of state and federal mandates to provide services.

Special Education expenditures continue to rise as the cost of LEA operations increase; salaries and benefits, step and column, and the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) and the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) rates affect Special Education in the same manner they affect the unrestricted General Fund programs. The funding for Special Education continues to be deficated each year until after the recalculations occur. 2014-15 was the first year that the deficit to special education remained when the final funding calculations were completed and it is projected that the deficit will continue in the 2015-16 close out. The deficits are not large or comparable to the large funding deficits that occurred on General Funds during the Great Recession; however, in an already chronically underfunded program, the loss of every penny on the dollar is an additional strain on LCFF dollars to maintain compliant programs. Over the past few years, the California Special Education Task Force and the Public Policy Institute of California issued separate reports wherein both agencies reported that Special Education funding was inadequate to meet the growing demand for services.

The chart below shows the growing contributions from LEAs' unrestricted General Funds that were needed to backfill Special Education expenditures in the last decade. In 2016-17, the state contributed 26.70% of funding, federal funds accounted for only 8.85% of funding, and local funds (including the LCFF) accounted for 64.45% of the total funds expended.



Source: Coalition for Adequate Funding for Special Education; 2016-17 Maintenance of Effort Reports by Special Education Local Plan Area

*2009-10 includes Federal Americans Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Funds

SBE Postpones Vote on Several ESSA State Plan Revisions

At the January 2018 State Board of Education (SBE) meeting, the SBE adopted clarifying language to California's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan. Since then, staff members from the SBE and the California Department of Education (CDE) have engaged in conversations with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to address outstanding concerns raised by the ED. As a result of these efforts, CDE staff are proposing several additional substantive changes to California's plan that they believe will satisfy the ED and ensure that the state receives approximately \$2.8 billion in expected federal funding.

Originally, the SBE planned on voting for all the proposed revisions at its March 14, 2018, meeting; however, the SBE decided to postpone voting on the more controversial items in order to give themselves and the public more time to fully understand the implications of the proposed changes. SBE President Michael Kirst said that the SBE will hold an additional meeting in April, at a date to be determined, to take up the proposed amendments. Some of the more significant proposals include:

- Counting the results of the 11th grade Smarter Balanced assessments twice, once as a component of the College/Career Indicator and second as an element of the Academic Indicator
- Considering only English learners in the current school year for the English Learner Progress Indicator and removing reclassified English learners from the formula
- Using outcomes on the Dashboard to identify the lowest-performing 5% of Title I schools statewide, and no longer limiting the universe of schools identified to those local educational agencies identified for state differentiated assistance as had been presented as an option at a prior SBE meeting.

Additionally, the SBE is concerned about a related requirement that districts provide targeted assistance to any school where a student group is performing poorly. The challenge with this requirement is that California has more than a dozen student groups and approximately 3,000 schools could be identified as needing assistance. To address this problem, the CDE recommends redefining “continuously low-performing student groups” as groups that perform poorly in three out of four years—a change that would delay assistance for at least three years and likely reduce the number of schools identified.

Although, the SBE did not vote on any of the substantive proposals, the discussion at the meeting indicates that the SBE is divided on whether to revise the state plan with staff’s proposed changes. Several SBE members expressed the concern that these changes move California away from a single coherent accountability system that addresses both state and federal requirements to a bifurcated system where federal accountability is based on proficiency and state accountability is based on achievement and improvement. Many SBE members said they are prepared to seek a waiver from the federal government rather than implement these changes to the ESSA State Plan. However, CDE staff explained that at their February meeting, the ED said it would not entertain a waiver from the state until California submitted a plan that complies with federal law. Board Member Patricia Rucker argued that the ED is establishing a precondition to approving a waiver, which is not allowed under the ESSA.

SBE Takes Several Actions at March Meeting

While the focus of the March State Board of Education (SBE) meeting seemed to be on the SBE’s decision to postpone a vote on several significant revisions to California’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan, the SBE also heard and took action on several other important issues.

The first issue that the SBE took action on was unanimously approving the California Department of Education’s (CDE) recommendation to make minor modifications to the self-reflection tool for the local indicator for State Priority 6 (school climate). The revisions include the addition of guiding questions, clarifying that additional data collection tools can be used to assess school conditions and climate, and a reference to data disaggregation as a best practice. Additionally, the SBE unanimously approved the proposed standard and self-assessment tool for local educational agencies (LEAs) to determine progress on the local indicator for State Priority 7 (access to a broad course of study).

Next, the SBE approved the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) for Special Education to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The SSIP requirement reflects the OSEP’s shift in focus from ensuring state and local compliance with Special Education law to also targeting improved outcomes for students through the development of state level systemic plans in order to increase student academic performance. The approved report includes detailed descriptions of the state’s SSIP, progress made over the year in implementation, progress toward achieving intended improvements, and plans for next year. The SBE was appreciative that California’s SSIP has been developed to align with the Local Control and Accountability Plan

(LCAP) in order to move toward the state's goal of establishing a single system of public education serving all students.

In addition to the items above, the SBE also took the following actions over the course of its two-day meeting:

- Approved revisions to the initial assessment blueprints for the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California
- Approved changes to the regulations of the California Education for a Global Economy Initiative, including:
 - That the proposed changes be circulated for a second 15-day public comment period in accordance with Administrative Procedure Act
 - That, if no relevant comments to the proposed changes are received during the 15-day public comment period, the proposed regulations are deemed adopted and the CDE is directed to complete the rulemaking package and submit it to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for approval
 - That, if any relevant comments to the proposed changes are received during the 15-day public comment period, the CDE is directed to place the proposed regulations on the SBE's May 2018 meeting agenda for action
 - Authorize the CDE to take any necessary ministerial action to respond to any direction or concern expressed by the OAL during its review of the rulemaking file
- Approved the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Renewal Grantee List for the grant term July 1, 2017–June 30, 2019
- Adopted the proposed LCAP addendum that allows an LEA to complete a single plan—together with the consolidated funding application—to meet both state and federal requirements, align state and federal resources, and help minimize duplication of effort at the local level
- Approved the 2017-18 Consolidated Applications submitted by LEAs
- Approved modifications to California's Strategic Workforce Development Plan: Skills Attainment for Upward Mobility and Aligned Services for Shared Prosperity: California's Workforce Development Plan Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act for program years 2016-2020

The SBE will host an additional meeting sometime in April to discuss the proposed amendments to the ESSA State Plan before its scheduled May 9-10, 2018, meeting.

Top Legislative Issues for 2018—April 6, 2018

The Legislature came back from Spring Recess to some packed policy committee agendas as hundreds of education bills will need to be heard by the Assembly and Senate Education Committees to meet upcoming deadlines. By April 27, 2018, bills that have fiscal implications will need to be approved by the policy committees; bills without fiscal effects will have an additional two weeks to meet that deadline.

Charter Schools

Senate Bill (SB) 949 (Allen, D-Santa Monica)—Conflicts of Interest: Public Officers and Employees: Charter Schools. This bill amends certain conflict-of-interest requirements mandated by Government Code Section (G.C.) 1090 and specifies that charter school governing boards are subject to the same requirements and exceptions as school district governing boards. G.C. 1090 is the state's central conflict-of-interest act, and there have been various legislative attempts over the years to apply

G.C. 1090 to charter schools. SB 949 passed its first hurdle this year with a successful vote out of the Senate Education Committee on April 4, 2018.

Employees

Assembly Bill (AB) 2154 (Bonta, D-Alameda)—Public Employment: Labor Relations: Release Time. Requires public employers to give union representatives paid release time for specified union activities including, but not limited to, investigating grievances, enforcing a collective bargaining agreement or memorandum of understanding, appearing as the union representative before the Public Employment Relations Board, or serving as the union representative for new employee orientations.

Facilities

AB 2816 (Muratsuchi, D-Torrance)—School Sites – Pesticides. As amended on March 22, AB 2816 would establish the Healthy Schools Act of 2018 and prohibit the use of indoor and outdoor pesticides at school sites, excluding family day care homes. The bill specifies that pesticides do not include certain products, including, but not limited to, antimicrobial pesticides and products, rodent- or insect-bait used in a tamper-resistant secured container, or products federally exempted products. The bill would provide narrow authority to use pesticides when students are not present if a local public health official determines that a public health emergency exists requiring the use of pesticides.

Miscellaneous

AB 2009 (Maienschein, R-San Diego)—Interscholastic Athletic Programs: School Districts: Written Emergency Action Plans: Automated External Defibrillator. As amended on March 13, 2018, this bill would require that the governing board of a school district or charter school that elects to offer any interscholastic athletic program, ensure that there is a written emergency action plan in place that describes the location and procedures to be followed in the event of sudden cardiac arrest and other medical emergencies related to the athletic program's activities or events and that the written emergency action plan is posted in compliance with the guidelines of the National Federation of State and High School Associations.

The bill, commencing July 1, 2019, would also require a school district to acquire and have available an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) for the purpose of rendering emergency care or treatment, within three to five minutes of sudden cardiac arrest, to pupils, spectators, and any other individuals in attendance at the athletic program's activities or events and ensure its availability to athletic trainers and coaches and authorized persons at these activities or events. The bill stipulates Education Code Section 49417 shall apply for purposes of determining whether an employee of a school district is liable for any civil damages resulting from his or her use, attempted use, or nonuse of an AED in the rendering of emergency care or treatment pursuant to this section and for purposes of determining whether a public school or school district is liable for any civil damages resulting from any act or omission in the rendering of emergency care or treatment pursuant to this section. The bill requires the school district offering any interscholastic athletic program shall ensure that its AED is maintained and regularly tested.

School Safety and Student Discipline

AB 2657 (Weber, D-San Diego)—Pupil Discipline: Restraint and Seclusion. The bill would prohibit an educational provider from using a behavioral restraint or seclusion in certain circumstances including, but not limited to, using seclusion or a behavioral restraint for the purpose of coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation, and would prohibit the use of certain restraint and seclusion techniques.

The bill would require an educational provider, as soon as possible, but no later than two school days after the use of seclusion or a behavioral restraint, to schedule a debriefing meeting regarding the use of seclusion or a behavioral restraint with the pupil, the pupil's parent or legal guardian, the staff members involved in the incident, and the educational provider's administrator, as specified.

The bill would require an educational provider to collect and, no later than three months after the end of a school year, report to the California Department of Education (CDE) annually on the use of behavioral restraints and seclusion for pupils enrolled in or served by the educational provider for all or part of the prior school year, as specified.

Special Education

AB 2168 (Thurmond, D-Richmond)—Special Education: Teachers: Grant Program. This bill would appropriate \$2 million in carryover funding from the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish a statewide framework, training and support network for the purpose of training and supporting qualified mentor teachers who will be supporting the new statewide influx of special education teachers in California.

AB 3136 (O'Donnell, D-Long Beach)—Special Education Funding. As amended on March 22, 2018, this bill would provide support to California's students with special needs by:

- Establishing a funding mechanism to support special education preschool programs by adding preschoolers to the AB 602 funding formula
- Addressing long-standing inequities by equalizing special education funding rates to the 95th percentile
- Providing a supplemental grant to support students with greater needs, including students on the autism spectrum, and students who are blind, visually impaired, and intellectually disabled
- Allowing school districts the ability to calculate a declining enrollment adjustment based on district, rather than Special Education Local Plan Area, average daily attendance

State Budget, Education Finance, LCFF

AB 1744 (McCarty, D-Sacramento)—After School Programs: Substance Use Prevention: Funding: Cannabis Revenue. Existing law establishes the After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program under which participating public schools receive grants to operate before and after school programs serving pupils in grades K-9. Existing law requires that each program component consist of an education and literacy element and an educational enrichment element.

This bill would specifically authorize for inclusion within the education enrichment element pupil assistance to prevent and reduce substance use and improve school retention and performance. Additionally, the bill would make the ASES Program, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, or the 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens Program an allowable use of tax revenues generated by Proposition 64, which sets aside 60% of the funds deposited into the Youth Education, Prevention, Early Intervention and Treatment Account, to be disbursed by the State Controller to the California Department of Health Care Services for programs for youth that are designed to educate about and prevent substance use disorders and prevent harm from substance use.

Student Health and Nutrition

AB 2022 (Chu, D-San Jose)—Pupil Health: On-Campus Mental Health Professionals. This bill requires by December 31, 2021, a school to have at least one mental health professional for every 600 pupils generally accessible to pupils on campus during school hours.

The role of this mental health professional shall include, but is not limited to, all of the following:

- Providing individual and small group counseling supports to individual pupils as well as pupil groups to address social-emotional and mental health concerns
- Facilitating collaboration and coordination between school and community providers to support pupils and their families by assisting families in identifying and accessing additional mental health services within the community as needed
- Promoting school climate and culture through evidence-informed strategies and programs by collaborating with school staff to develop best practices for behavioral health management and classroom climate
- Providing professional development to staff in diverse areas including, but not limited to, behavior management strategies, mental health support training, trauma-informed practices, and professional self-care

AB 2360 (Rodriguez, D-Pomona)—Pupil Nutrition: School District and Food Bank Partnerships. As amended on April 3, 2018, this bill would require the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), in collaboration with the CDE, the Strategic Growth Council (SGC), and other relevant entities and experts, to establish guidelines and best practices for food banks and school districts to create partnerships to increase the access of pupils to fresh produce food items. The bill would require the CDFA, the CDE, and the SGC to each post, by January 1, 2020, the guidelines on the agency's respective website. The bill would also require the CDE to disseminate the guidelines to school districts and the CDFA to disseminate the guidelines to food banks by January 1, 2020.

Assembly Education Committee Set to Hear LCFF and Special Education Bills

The Legislature is quickly approaching the April 27, 2018, deadline for any bills with a monetary impact to pass out of their assigned policy committee. In order to meet this deadline, policy committees' agendas will be picking up over the next three weeks as hundreds of bills that have fiscal implications will need to be approved. Legislation that successfully passes this hurdle will proceed to the Appropriations committees.

The Assembly Education Committee, chaired by Assembly Member Patrick O'Donnell (D-Long Beach), is slated to hear nearly 40 bills next Wednesday, April 11, 2018, including a handful that would significantly affect the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and special education. Below we preview the LCFF and special education bills scheduled to be heard at next Wednesday's hearing.

LCFF Bills

Among the bills set to be heard by the committee is Assembly Bill (AB) 2808 by Assembly Member Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance). This bill would increase funding targets for the LCFF to address ongoing needs for school districts including growing fixed costs such as employer pension contributions and special education services. Specifically, this bill would increase LCFF base grants, commencing with the 2019-20 fiscal year, as follows:

- From \$6,845 to \$11,799 for average daily attendance (ADA) in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive
- From \$6,947 to \$11,975 for ADA in grades 4 to 6, inclusive

- From \$7,154 to \$12,332 for ADA in grades 7 and 8
- From \$8,289 to \$14,289 for ADA in grades 9 to 12, inclusive

Supplemental, concentration, and grade span adjustment grants would increase consistent with the existing formula. Funding would be contingent upon an appropriation and could be funded over time using the growth in the Proposition 98 guarantee.

The other LCFF bill scheduled to be heard is AB 2635 by Assembly Member Shirley Weber (D-San Diego). This bill would, contingent upon an appropriation, adjust the definition of “unduplicated pupils” to include students that are identified as the lowest performing subgroup or subgroups based on the most recently available California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress math and English language arts scores. The bill would require the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to annually identify the lowest performing pupil subgroup or subgroups.

Special Education Bills

Assembly Member O’Donnell will present AB 3136 to the committee on Wednesday, April 11, 2018. This bill would provide critical support to California’s students with special needs by:

- Establishing a funding mechanism to support special education preschool programs by adding preschoolers to the AB 602 funding formula.
- Addressing long-standing inequities by equalizing special education funding rates to the 95th percentile.
- Providing a supplemental grant to support students with greater needs, including students who are on the autism spectrum, blind, visually impaired, and intellectually disabled.
- Allowing school districts the ability to calculate a declining enrollment adjustment based on district, rather than Special Education Local Plan Area, ADA.

Assembly Member O’Donnell will also present AB 2704, which would expand the Family Empowerment Centers (FEC) on Disability network to regions of the state that are not currently served by a center. The bill also provides a one-time adjustment to increase the base grant that each FEC receives from \$150,000 to \$223,000, and would improve coordination between California’s Department of Education and FECs through the development of a uniform and rigorous data collection, tracking, and reporting system.

Assembly Member Tony Thurmond (D-Richmond) will present AB 2168, which appropriates \$2 million in Individuals with Disabilities Education Act funding to make grants to local educational agencies to support special education teacher mentoring for the retention of new special education teachers.

District:

From 89.3 KPCC, Kyle Stokes, April 4, 2018 -

LAUSD board to play more direct role in setting rules for charter schools — and charter leaders are thrilled

Members of a working group of Los Angeles Unified School District officials and charter school leaders stands before the district's school board on Tues., April 3, 2018.

Five months ago, the Los Angeles Unified School District was locked in a "game of chicken" with the leaders of almost two-dozen L.A. charter schools — a showdown that appeared headed for a crash.

The showdown was over the "district-required language," a template that every charter school needing the school board's permission to open or to stay open in L.A. Unified had to fill out. If the dispute sounds wonky and bureaucratic, that's because it was — but the leaders of 20 schools felt so strongly about it that they were willing to put their charters' futures on the line.

As it was, staff in the L.A. Unified Charter Schools Division could change the boilerplate of the "district-required language" whenever and however they wanted. Essentially, district staff could unilaterally decide which school district rules they wanted charter schools — which are publicly-funded schools run by outside groups — to follow.

So in November, the leaders of about two-dozen of these schools refused to follow the "district-required language," essentially daring the district to deny their schools' charter petitions unless something changed. District officials weren't budging, fearing the changes would free the charter schools from too much oversight.

But the two sides stayed at the negotiating table, even into the hours before a critical school board meeting. They struck a last-minute deal to avoid the messy charter revocations. And then, for months afterward, the two sides kept talking — the leaders of 13 charter schools, district officials and representatives of the California Charter Schools Association.

Fast-forward to Tuesday: L.A. Unified school board members voted 6-0 to formalize and add a few finishing touches to the deal — a moment that charter leaders and district officials said represented a significant thaw in a sometimes-icy relationship between the two camps.

"Instead of escalating conflict, we have found ways to de-escalate," said interim L.A. Unified superintendent Vivian Ekchian.

Tuesday's vote changed who gets control over the boilerplate language in charter schools' petitions. Instead of district staff, members of the L.A. Unified school board will now vote annually to approve a uniform "district-required language" document that every charter will have to follow.

Board members also approved a specific list of policies to which charters would be subject, and will also vote annually on whether to update that list.

"What we're going to have is an authorizing environment where the rules are clear," said Emilio Pack, who runs STEM Prep charter schools and also participated in the task force.

"It makes it a lot easier for the [Charter Schools Division] to enforce those policies and it becomes much more easy to follow when you actually know what the applicable policies are," Pack said. "Transparency, clarity — those things then turn into more time and effort towards educating kids."

The board also made plans to keep convening formal conversations between district staff and the advisory group, currently comprised of representatives of independent charter schools large and small.

But George McKenna, the only board member to withhold his support from the deal, wondered why principals from L.A. Unified schools — who are often asked to share space on their campuses with charter schools — were not included in the advisory group.

"The concern I have here is for transparency," McKenna said. "I have seen the unwillingness, through legislation proposed in Sacramento, of the charter school community" to commit to transparency.

Board member Scott Schmerelson also expressed concerns, but ultimately voted "yes" on the new arrangement, basing his tentative support on Ekchian's recommendation.

To Donald Cohen, the founder of In The Public Interest, a think tank that has called for more stringent regulation of charter schools, any arrangement that transfers control of some charter oversight functions from district staff to the L.A. Unified board is troubling.

Cohen noted charter school lobbying groups spent heavily to elect four of the seven board members.

"There is a place for [the board] to be involved in policy-setting, but it does politicize the process," said Cohen, "and it does allow charters to have a lot more influence" over setting the rules.

But in an interview, Pack said there is an upside to giving the board control over the "district-required language" and the rules charters must follow: "What it allows to happen is a transparent conversation about what those changes are."

Though charter groups and district officials are still divided on issues as equally-vexing as the "district-required language" debate seemed in November, members of the two camps were able to present a united front on Tuesday.

Speaking to board members about the particulars of the compromise, Pack and other charter leaders stood side by side with district officials, including L.A. Unified's Chief Academic Officer Frances Gipson.

Pack said the involvement of Gipson, who led working group meetings, was critical.

"Dr. Gipson did such an outstanding job," Pack told the board. "That wasn't in the script," joked Gipson.

The Fenton schools have completed staff reorganization in preparation for the 2018-2019 school year, and one significant area of focus is the hiring of additional special education personnel. After reviewing the costs of outsourcing our personnel needs to properly service all students, it is clear that hiring full-time Fenton employees as much as possible is a more effective route for our schools. We hope to have nearly all positions filled by the end of this school year, but realize that some hiring will happen during the summer. Processing cannot take place until the month of July due to the timing of TB test results as required by the District for purposes of oversight.

YPICS:

MORCS Oversight Visit

On Wednesday, April 11, 2018, Monseñor Oscar Romero Charter School went through the final YPICS Oversight visit for this academic school year. The LAUSD Team was complimentary of the instructional practices that were evident in the classrooms, small group instruction, summary writing support of ELs using the EIE method in the grade level ELA classroom, data-driven instructional practices, mastery grading, and computer assisted instruction or enhanced learning. The team would like to see more Success For All literacy strategies being utilized during the core content part of the students' day. The team could see the hard work that has been put into supporting a campus to run positively and more smoothly this year. The LAUSD Team felt that their focus interview with students did not yield what they are accustomed to and concluded that students would not talk with them because of their lack of trust of adults and perhaps the adults on campus. We disagreed and we concluded that our students in this part of the city, and given the current political climate, that our students are not trustful of adults that

they do not know. We will keep that fact that our students, who were randomly selected by the LAUSD Team would not talk with the LAUSD Charter School Division (CSD) Team, moving forward may need more support to feel safe on campus with other adults outside of our MORCS School Team. We will provide the oversight report to the board when we receive it from the CSD.

Parent Conferences

All three YPICS are held parent conferences last month. Parent attendance is has exceeded the 88% for the high school and over 95% for the middle schools. We continue to inform parents about upcoming changes as soon as possible during conferences. Additionally, we have parents engage in parent surveys during the conferences so that we can have data to determine next steps needed or to determine if a change in course of action is warranted.

Reorganization

YPICS have completed staff reorganization in preparation for the 2018-2019 school year, and one significant area of focus is considering how to continue to support the social emotional needs of our secondary general and special needs populations. We are currently reviewing the costs of outsourcing our SPED personnel needs to properly service all students, it is appears that hiring full-time YPICS employees as much as possible is potentially a more effective route for our schools. We hope to have nearly all positions filled by the end of this school year, but realize that some hiring will happen during the summer. Processing cannot take place until the month of July due to the timing of TB test results as required by the District for purposes of oversight.