PRESIDENT’S CORNER
California School Dashboard: Putting the Data to Good Use

APRIL 27, 2017 DINNER MEETING

At our very successful VCSBA March dinner meeting regarding overcoming our hidden prejudices, VCSBA did something different. At our presenters’ request, participants were assigned a seat at a table where no one else from their school district was seated. What a way to make a new friend or colleague. Perhaps VCSBA will try this practice at future dinner meetings.

Come to our next exciting meeting on Thursday, April 27 to learn about the new California School Dashboard and its impact on Local Control Accountability Plans. Our panel consists of:

- **Dr. Antonio Castro**
  Associate Superintendent
  Educational Services
  Ventura County Office of Education

- **Ms. Lisa Salas Brown**
  Director, Local District Support Services
  Ventura County Office of Education

- **Dr. Ann Bonitatibus**
  Superintendent
  Conejo Valley Unified School District

- **Ms. Donna Rose**
  Assistant Superintendent
  Business Services Division
  Santa Paula Unified School District

It will be a very informative night that gives school board members insight into using the Dashboard Data in our local planning processes.

I have one last word regarding nominations. Throw your name in the hat to become a VCSBA Board Member. Open positions are:

- President
- 1st Vice President, Programs
- 2nd Vice President, Legislation
- Secretary
- Treasurer

If you would like to be nominated for a position on the VCSBA Board please contact one of the following:

Suzanne Kitchens
Pleasant Valley School District
skitchens@pvsd.k12.ca.us

John Anderson
Conejo Valley Unified School District
andersens_5@verizon.net

Dr. Ramon Flores
Ventura County Board of Education
dr.ramon.flores@gmail.com

See you on April 27, 2017!

Christina Urias, President, VCSBA
Santa Paula Unified School District
SELPA Face Uncertain Future

Ventura County’s Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) is the 2nd largest multidistrict agency of its kind in the State serving 17,600 students with disabilities (SWDs) and is one of 133 such regional entities in California. All school districts in Ventura County, including Las Virgenes Unified, are active participants in determining the best methods and strategies for serving some of our neediest students.

In March 2015 the California Special Education Task Force report was released culminating two years of work. It provided a comprehensive review of the complex special education system and contained a set of recommendations in the key areas of special education, including finance. However, in 2016 the Administration requested that the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) to conduct an additional study on special education finance.

The PPIC recently released their report which recommended – among other things - dismantling the current system of distributing special education funding for California’s SWDs via SELPAs and sending the money - billions of dollars – directly to local school districts; similar to what Governor Brown mandated a few years ago through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). These recommendations would change the way special education finances have worked in California for almost 40 years and potentially eliminating SELPAs. According to the PPIC, funding earmarked for SWDs would continue to be spent for general special education but districts would have “no firm restrictions on use,” i.e., more flexibility with the money. However, districts would still be required to adhere to all aspects of federal law as specified in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

SELPA evolved from the 1974 California Master Plan for Special Education which called for school agencies within geographical regions to develop a “comprehensive plan” to serve SWDs to ensure they would have access to the programs and services they needed and were afforded by law. Due to increases in laws, regulations, monitoring and number of SWDs, SELPAs now have added responsibilities including: program development, training, technical assistance, data reporting, compliance monitoring, agency collaboration, dispute resolution and parent engagement.

Therefore, we believe that the PPIC proposals may likely result in creating more problems than solutions. If these recommendations were adopted by Governor Brown and the Legislature, our districts would face significant challenges in ensuring that students are properly identified, are provided necessary services, and are able to complete all of the administrative requirements of the State and Federal government. For example, smaller districts would be faced with tremendous operational and regulatory burdens, currently handled through the collaborative structure of SELPAs. Questions also arise as to who would provide necessary professional development to teachers in the field and coordinate mandated mental health services to SWDs. We also suspect that the California Department of Education would not willingly embrace reportage from nearly 10 times as many agencies as they currently do through SELPAs.

The Governor’s Department of Finance is currently conducting stakeholder meetings across the state to obtain feedback on the PPIC’s report, and so far, the response has been overwhelmingly against the proposals as presented by the PPIC. Moreover, many believe that should an action like this come to pass, SELPAs would of necessity need to be reinvented ins some form. Stay tuned.

Stan Mantooth
Ventura County Superintendent of Schools
LEGISLATIVE REPORT
Four Top Issues Emerge from CSBA Legislative Action Day

CSBA’s Legislative Action Day was March 21st this year. The most pressing issues identified by CSBA became the focus for our legislator meetings in the Capitol and are recommended for further information sessions at home with your legislators between now and the end of this legislative session. The four issues selected for this legislative session are:

1. Improve the 2017-18 State Budget Proposal
   a. Do NOT manipulate the Proposition 98 guarantee! An accounting maneuver was used to artificially reduce the guarantee by $1.7 billion. Prop. 98 is a floor, not a ceiling.
   b. Urge support for SB 527 (Galgiani), which establishes a cost-of-living adjustment for home-to-school transportation.
   c. Continue to invest in LCFF. The state needs to invest in schools, especially in school districts that did not benefit from LCFF.

2. Deal with the Rising Cost of Pensions
   a. The significant increases in pension contributions by school districts is just one of many cost pressures facing California education.
   b. The combined employer costs per-student for PERS and STRS are poised to triple over a ten year period from 2014 to 2024.
   c. Support additional funding from the state to help offset the rising costs.
   d. Continue to support a defined benefit program.

3. Fix the Reserve Cap
   a. Urge support for SB 751 (CSBA sponsored) which will eliminate the requirement to spend reserves down to a level of six percent.
   b. This requirement is antithetical to the local control that is being given to school districts.
   c. The reserve cap hurts schools now by affecting their credit rating.
   d. Another rainy day is coming and school districts should be able to maintain a healthy reserve for the next economic downturn.

4. Reverse the California Teacher Shortage
   a. Thank the Legislature for $35 million to address the shortage for the classified employee credential program, the development of four-year integrated credential programs, and recruitment efforts through CalTeach.
   b. Support lowering the cost of education and training programs for teachers.
   c. Local control is the key to helping LEAs address factors that impact teacher supply.

See www.csba.org for more detail on these issues.
Legislators Sympathetic to Education

Our legislator meetings in the Capitol were very productive as we met with our supportive law-makers. VCSBA was well represented in Sacramento with eleven members attending meetings with our Senate and Assembly members, including:

- Dr. Charles Weis, Hueneme SD
- Debra Cordes, Oxnard SD
- Denis O’Leary, Oxnard SD
- Veronica Robles-Solis, Oxnard SD
- Karen Sher, Oxnard Union HSD
- Suzanne Kitchens, Pleasant Valley SD
- Pat Fitzgerald, Pleasant Valley SD
- Dr. Mark Lisagor, VCOE
- Mary Haffner, Ventura Unified SD
- Sabrena Rodriguez Ventura Unified SD

We met with Assemblymember Monique Limon, Assemblymember Jacquie Irwin and Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson. Each of our representatives were sympathetic and knowledgeable about our issues and pledged to do whatever they can to further our causes. They also mentioned that education will be competing with Health and Human Services for funding due to expected deep cuts in Federal funding in Medicare and other services for the poor in California. Even more than usual, the financial uncertainty for the next budget year is driving decision-making.

Tri-County Education Coalition

I also attended the Tri-County Education Coalition meeting at the Goleta School District on March 10, 2017. California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO), California School Boards Association (CSBA), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) had representatives on the panel to share their perspectives on budget negotiations and the political climate in Sacramento. There were many areas of agreement among these associations at the meeting. Tri-County Education Coalition (TCEC) is an excellent group that schedules informational meetings in Goleta throughout the school year and travels to Sacramento together in May each year after the release of the May Revise (when negotiations really begin on the State Budget). If you are not a member yet, I suggest you visit the website at www.TCECoalition.org and consider joining.

Dr. Charles Weis, VP, Legislation, VCSBA
Hueneme School District

VCSBA Executive Board Elections for 2017-18

The VCSBA Nominating Committee is pleased to announce it has found a slate of candidates to fill the VCSBA Executive Board positions for 2017-18. We are fortunate that many of the incumbent Board members have graciously and selflessly agreed to continue to serve:

**PRESIDENT:** Christina Urias (Santa Paula)

**SECRETARY:** Denise Helfstein (Oak Park)

**TREASURER:** Steve Blum (VCCCD)

**1st VP, Programs:** Steve Sullivan (Mesa Union)

**2nd VP, Legislation:** Dr. Charles Weis (Hueneme)

Nominations will continue to be open until the vote on the new Executive Board is taken at the April 27th VCSBA Dinner meeting. Please contact any member of the Nominating Committee if you are interested in serving:

Suzanne Kitchens
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skitchens@pvsd.k12.ca.us

John Anderson
Conejo Valley Unified School District
andersens_5@verizon.net

Dr. Ramon Flores
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