

Legislature Moves Several Key Education Bills Forward – Both the Senate and Assembly Education Committees met this past week and moved a number of key measures forward. We want to highlight the following:

- **[SB 837 \(Steinberg\) Schools: Transitional Kindergarten](#)** – This bill expands eligibility for transitional kindergarten to all four-year olds, phased-in over a four year period beginning in the 2015-16 school year. The bill received extensive discussion, with ACSA leading the opposition largely attributable to the unfunded costs of teacher preparation/training and facilities. As you would expect, the Senate leader's bill passed out of committee 6-1 (Senator Huff voting no), with two abstentions (Senators Correa and Wyland).
- **[SB 1137 \(Torres\) School Transportation Apportionments](#)** – The bill would, over a seven year period, equalize all HTST funding to at least 50% of approved costs. Additionally, the bill would require the HTST program annually receive a COLA adjustment. The cost of the measure is estimated at approximately \$250 million at the end of the seven years. The bill was supported by a large number of county offices of education and school districts. It was opposed by the charter schools association. The bill passed out of committee by a vote of 7-0.
- **[AB 2235 \(Buchanan\) K-University Public Education Facilities Bond](#)** – This bill would place a state school bond on the November 2014 ballot. The bill had one of the longest lines of people testifying in support that we have seen in a long time. The bill moved out of committee with a unanimous bi-partisan vote of 7-0.
- **[AB 2319 \(Bonilla\) School Finance: Innovation, Training, and Common Core Implementation Fund](#)** – This bill would establish a new grant for all schools to fund a number of needs related to Common Core implementation, technology, professional development, instructional materials, CTE, and STEAM (art is included) courses. The bill was amended in committee to remove STEAM and CTE courses to more resemble the one-time funding provided in the most recent state budget for Common Core implementation. The bill passed by a

vote of 7-0.

Assembly Budget Subcommittee Adopts ROC/P Funding Language – The Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Education Finance voted unanimously this past week to adopt placeholder budget language to “ensure that state educational agencies continue to provide regionally coordinated CTE through Regional Occupational Centers and Programs beyond the 2014-15 fiscal year.”

It is important to note that so far this action has only been taken by the budget subcommittee in the Assembly. We have a long way to go before we have a final budget, but this does signal that CTE funding will be a major conversation in this year’s budget negotiation. Also, there are no more specifics to the Assembly’s funding proposal, but most parties involved have acknowledged the current Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirement is not a reasonable mechanism for CTE funding going forward. The Legislature, likely led by Assembly Member Al Muratsuchi (Chair of the subcommittee, former ROCP board member), will have to negotiate with the Governor to preserve any kind of discrete funding for CTE, as the Governor is strongly opposed to categorical programs.

State Revenues Looking Good – The state’s revenues continue to show impressive monthly collections. According to the State Controller’s Office, March revenues surpassed estimates by nearly 8%, bringing in an additional \$470.9 million. The Controller credits the improving job market as the reason for the over-performance. He says the next crucial time will be this month (April) as personal income tax revenues come in (reminder to pay your taxes by Tuesday...).

These are positive signs as we approach the Governor’s May Revision (May 15). If April tax revenues come in at or above estimates, the Governor will likely be able to use some additional assumed level of revenue in his revised budget proposal - which would likely require additional Prop 98 funding. We expect a conversation around the use of any potential increases in one-time education funds for common core implementation, with a particular focus on technology needs.

Governor Brown's Approval Rating is High, Legislature Reeling from Scandals – A Field Poll released this week shows a stark picture of political perceptions in the state. Governor Brown's approval rating has surged to an all-time high of 59%, while the Legislature's approval, which had seen recent gains, is trending downward after the recent political scandals.

We often teased of the Legislature's embarrassing 9-15% approval ratings in mid-2010 when things were at their worst in the state. However, it is important to note that as the economy improved, their approval rating had increased to 46% as recently as a few weeks ago. In fact, just prior to the most recent Field Poll, more people approved of the Legislature than disapproved – something we hadn't seen for years. Enter political scandals (which include corruption allegations involving money and gun running). Now, 46% disapprove of the Legislature's performance, while 43% approve.

A 59% approval rating is very good for a sitting Governor facing reelection. His closest opponent in the reelection race, State Assemblyman Tim Donnelly (R-Hesperia), is a clear favorite with Republican voters, beating out fellow Republican Neel Kashari in terms of support by 37% to 3%.

When all voters were asked who they are more likely to support for Governor, Brown won with 57%. Donnelly was listed second with 17%.

We continue to see this race as solidly in Brown's column – absent some cataclysmic shift in the political landscape.

Tensions High Among Democrats in the Capitol – You may have been following the recent conflict over the proposed Constitutional amendment by Senator Ed Hernandez (D-West Covina) to reinstate affirmative action in California ([SCA 5](#)). The bill was recently tabled by Speaker John Perez. The fallout has been interesting as we've seen remarkable internal conflict within the Democratic caucuses – mostly along racial lines. As recent press reports have highlighted,

some Latino and African American Democrats have been withholding votes and pulling endorsements of some Asian Democrats for having lobbied to stop SCA 5. It is important to note this phenomenon because it is having an effect on legislative proposals that have nothing to do with the proposed Constitutional amendment. For example, Assembly Member Muratuschi's (D-Torrance) bill to address fuel efficient vehicles access to diamond lanes was sidelined by members of his own party – something most observers have linked to the fallout over SCA 5. We're watching how this could affect K-12 education bills going forward. It may also have an added effect on the Senate leadership race, which is already clouded by the recent departure of three Democrats.