

October 2018

STRONG START

IN THIS ISSUE



Strong Start already has a website, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn accounts - why a newsletter?

This quarterly round-up of activities, opportunities, and events is a resource for Strong Start members and friends who don't want to check in every day. It's also easily forwarded so if you know of anyone who might be interested in our efforts to support the county's young children and families - please send it on to them.

In our seventh issue, we'll give an overview of the recent 2018 Santa Clara County Voter's Guide on Children's Issues prepared by Kids in Common, the Local Early Education Planning Council and Strong Start, describe which early care and education (ECE) bills made it through the legislative session and into law, provide highlights of the recent California Budget and Policy Center report on state spending in ECE, discuss the ECE-related findings of Getting Down To Facts II - a compendium of studies on education in California, and provide an update on the progress of the county-wide Children's Health Assessment transition to the Children's Health Improvement Plan. With election season in full swing there are a number of voter education events and forums in the [events calendar](#) on the Strong Start web site.

If you think someone you know would, or should, be interested in this newsletter, please forward it to them. Santa Clara County's youngest children need their adults to be their advocates and the better informed we all are, the better advocates we can be. Thanks for reading and for everything you do for the children and families of Santa Clara County.

VOTER'S GUIDE

ON CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Local Elections
November 6, 2018

Even though they do not vote, the nearly 438,000 children living in Santa Clara County deserve elected officials who understand how funding and policy decisions impact their lives. Too often, children are lost in a long list of priorities. However, decisions made today about investing in children's safety, health, education and economic security have long-term effects on our community's future. Our community's and our nation's current and future prosperity will be decided by our elected officials. This is why the Santa Clara County Local Early Education Planning Council, Strong Start of Santa Clara County and Kids in Common, a program of Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, came together to create a Voter's Guide on Children's Issues. For the guide we asked each candidate running for selected local, state or federal offices in Santa Clara County - well over 200 in total - to answer five questions about their priorities for children. Candidates were given several weeks to respond to the survey. The responses in the guide are in their words and are unedited.

This Voter's Guide is informational only and no endorsement of any candidate is intended.

We did our best to contact every candidate and ask them to participate in this Voter's Guide. In many cases, candidates had an email address or phone number listed with the Registrar of Voters. In cases where this was not available, we searched for a website or other manner of contacting them. Even with our best efforts, we were unable to reach more than 35 of the candidates for the selected offices.

A link to the full online guide can be found [here](#)

Early Care and Education at the end of the Legislative Session



September 30th was the last day for bills to be signed into law, vetoed or to become law without the Governor's signature. Of the bills we have been following throughout the two year legislative session, most did not make it. Notable passings include AB 1754 (McCarty) that would have greatly expanded eligibility for full-day preschool programs operated at California public schools, AB 2292 (Aguiar-Curry) that would have increased adjustment factors for serving infants and toddlers (provisions that were included in the Budget for 2018-19 and so may have been considered redundant), AB 2398 (Mullin) that would have modified the Child Care Revolving Loan Fund, and AB 2568 (Thurmond) that would have imposed a tax on vendors to the State's prison system and used the revenue from that tax to pay for preschool and after-school programs. AB 11 (McCarty) that would have required that the state's screening services under the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program include developmental screenings for children 0 to 3 years of age, made it all the way to the Governor's desk, only to be vetoed. There are, however, some notable survivors in the process that may start to re-anneal the state's fragmented ECE system into something more like a whole. AB 605 (Mullin) requires the state to create a streamlined licensing system for all child care providers by 2021 and to implement the system by 2024. AB 2698 (Rubio) creates a 5% increase in funding for ECE programs that provide early childhood mental health consultation. AB 2626 (Mullin) extends a number of the modifications to the state's ECE programs that have been implemented in the 13 existing county-wide local child care pilot programs to all the programs across the state. AB 2960 (Thurmond), that requires the state to create an online portal for parents to access child development programs, has also made it to the Governor's desk but doesn't appropriate any funds for the development of this online tool. Finally, AB 2370 (Holden), which requires licensed child care centers in buildings built before 2010 to test their drinking water for lead contamination – which might not move us towards a comprehensive ECE system but just seems like a good idea, was also signed by the Governor. The whole

process will restart after the election on December 3rd.

State Spending on Early Care and Education: Highlights of the California Budget and Policy Center brief and fact sheet

The California Budget and Policy Center has released its latest child care and preschool fact sheet ([here](#)) with the headline that, adjusted for inflation, state spending on early care and education (ECE) programs are “near pre-recession levels with [a] boost from one time funding”. The fact sheet goes on to describe the history of the state budget in reversing the \$1.4 billion (approximately 36%) in cuts made to ECE from 2009-10 to 2013-14 to the current budget of \$3.9 billion. Importantly, funding for slots remains \$250 million less than in 2008-09 (adjusted for inflation), meaning that tens of thousands of fewer children are being served despite this restoration. It’s also worth bearing in mind that this restoration includes hundreds of millions of dollars in Federal funds and one-time money (specifically the Inclusive Early Care and Education Expansion Program) and that funding for vital pieces of California’s ECE system, like the centralized eligibility lists, resource and referral agencies, and local planning councils, have either not been restored or have not kept pace with inflation. Given that, the report seems less like cause for celebration than evidence of the state’s ongoing underinvestment in its youngest citizens. A number of politicians have observed that a budget is an expression of values and, as elections draw near, it is worth considering whether our state budget reflects the value we place on young children.

Total Funding for Subsidized Child Care and Preschool in California (Billions), Inflation-Adjusted



Note: Figures reflect the enacted budget each year except for 2008-09, which reflects the revised budget as of February 2009. Figures include federal and state funds for slots as well as for quality and support programs and are in 2018-19 dollars. Child care includes CalWORKs and non-CalWORKs programs. Preschool excludes Transitional Kindergarten.

Source: California Department of Education and Department of Finance



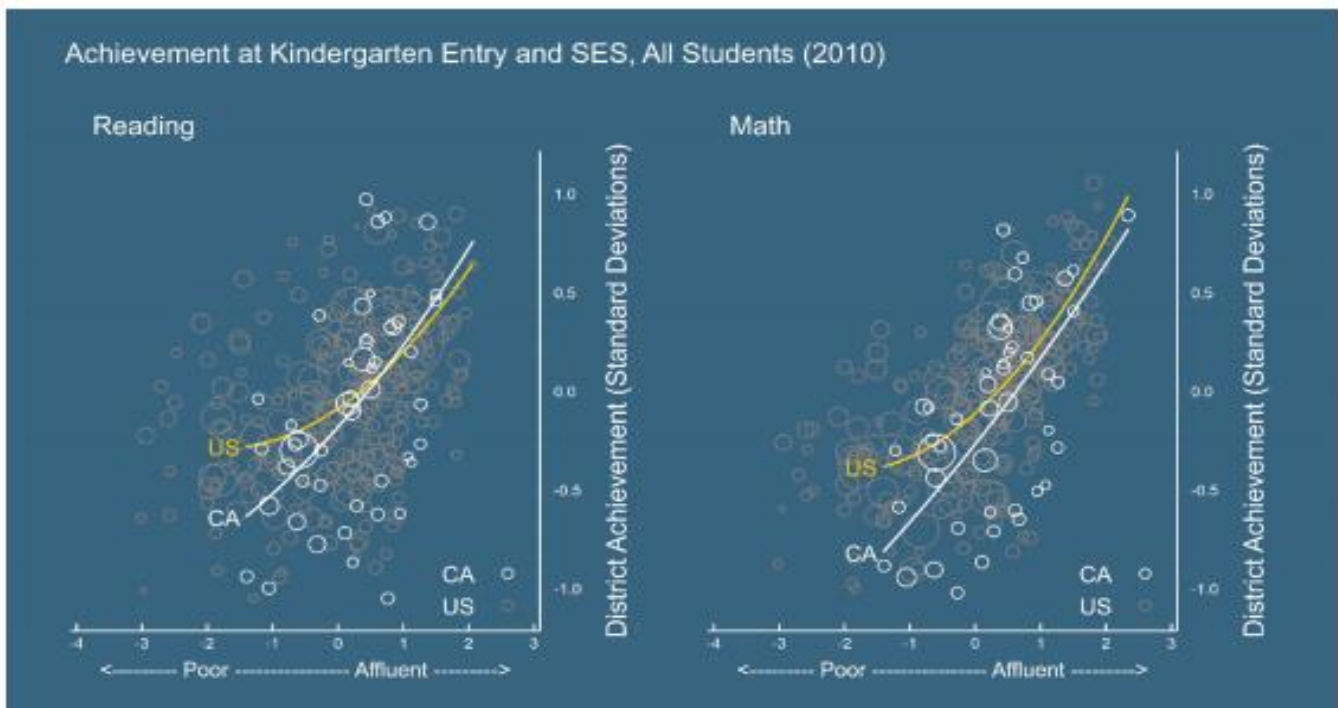
California Budget & Policy Center
Independent Analysis. Shared Prosperity.

Getting Down To Facts II:

Earlier this week saw the release of the Getting Down To Facts II studies from Stanford University Graduate School of Education and Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE). The full suite of 36 studies and accompanying policy briefs and resources are available here. It's an enormous body of work that has been synthesized into six key points: (i) state policy is moving in the right direction but that movement needs to be consolidated, (ii) achievement gaps in California are larger than the national average but are closing slowly, (iii) California's children are behind before they enter kindergarten and low-income children in particular need greater access to quality early care and education (ECE), (iv) our schools are underfunded to meet their goals, (v) there are critical funding issues are pensions, special education and facilities that need to be addressed, and (vi) California's weak and disconnected education data systems are a barrier to improving outcomes for children.

The studies and focusing on ECE were similarly unsettling and highlighted “diminished investments in quality, low wages, and highly fractured oversight”. The brief includes the infamous “spaghetti chart” of funders, programs, providers and oversight that comprises our ECE policy landscape and criticizes the disparities in funding and quality that this “dizzying array” creates. It also calls out the high cost, variable quality, and low accessibility of programs – especially for children with special needs where the state lags substantially behind the national average for every ethnic group in the percentage of students served. These deficiencies have a direct impact on student outcomes. The 50 page Portrait of Education Outcomes [study](#) makes clear that California's larger-than-average achievement gaps are a direct result of lower-than average school readiness at kindergarten entry. “California's low-income districts lag behind their national counterparts primarily because of lower school-readiness levels in the California districts, not because learning rates are lower in California's low-income districts than in similar districts across the US”. Disappointingly, and unsurprisingly, the report goes on to point out that exactly these findings were made more than a decade ago.

However, in contrast with a decade ago, ECE has been a prominent part of the policy landscape in the Bay Area and statewide during this election season. There have been local funding initiatives on the June and upcoming November ballots, and both gubernatorial candidates have discussed their ideas for how to improve ECE in California. There are a number of upcoming candidate forums and other opportunities to learn more about how our elected officials at all levels will address these issues. Hopefully we can seize this moment to from research to action and ensure every children get the strong start they deserve.



Santa Clara County's Children's Health Improvement Plan

In the April 2017 newsletter we presented an overview of the Santa Clara County Children's Health Assessment and noted the report states "one of the critical concerns that emerged throughout this assessment is the importance of quality preschool among children in Santa Clara County." Recommendations included "mak[ing] quality child care programs more affordable and accessible for low-income families [and] universal preschool for children, including summer programming for low-income children and programs for children with development disabilities" as key strategies. Subsequently SCCOE and FIRST 5 Santa Clara County were designated as the lead partners for the "universal preschool and access to quality childcare" strategy and have been working with the Santa Clara County Public Health Department on an implementation plan for the Children's Health Improvement Plan based on the assessment and aligned with the county-wide Early Learning Master Plan. On Tuesday, September 19th, Superintendent Dewan was part of a team presenting on the development of the implementation plan to the County Board of Supervisors Children, Family and Seniors sub-committee. The presentation is available here.



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