



Early Educator

CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

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CFT co-sponsors Early Learning Advocacy Day

The California Federation of Teachers (CFT) was a proud co-sponsor of Early Learning Advocacy Day in Sacramento, on June 9, 2009. The event was a rousing success with more than 300 early learning advocates – including early childhood educators, par-

state legislators and staff to share their stories about how high-quality early learning programs benefit California's children, families and communities.

The event, hosted by the California Association for the Education of Young Children and Preschool California and co-sponsored by more than 40 organizations, highlighted the strength of our movement as we came together to speak with one strong voice for California's youngest children. While we were talking with legislative offices during a time of unprecedented fiscal crisis in our state, we were able to get our message across that high-quality early learning programs



CFT ECE members participate in Early Learning Advocacy Day: Isabel Delgadillo, ABC Local 2317; Alejandra Cisneros, Early Childhood Federation, Local 1475; Betty Robinson Harris, United Educators of San Francisco, Local 61; Arleen Rivera, Early Childhood Federation, Local 1475; Ramiro Hernandez, AFT National Representative assigned to work with local 1475; Ruth Molina, Early Childhood Federation, Local 1475.

“Our kids are not going to wait for us.”

—Jack O’Connell

ents, business and labor leaders and others – coming from across California to the State Capitol to advocate for high-quality early learning. Participants met with more than 100

are an essential long-term investment for California, and that in these difficult economic times it is more important than ever to protect our most vulnerable children.

Earlier in the day, advocates heard from a lineup of early care and education (ECE) luminaries. Betty Robinson-Harris, a CFT ECE Committee member and long time ECE teacher in San Francisco, spoke to the group as a member of the *Voices from the Field* panel.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell explained that investing in preschool and closing the readiness gap in California is essential to achieving his top two

priorities of continuing academic progress and closing the achievement gap. O’Connell also rallied the audience for their legislative visits. “You may hear now is not the right time,” O’Connell said, “We have to operate in a no excuses zone. Our kids are not going to wait for us.”

Assembly member Tom Torlakson also stopped by to talk about the importance of high-quality early learning as a “spring board for success” in school and in life. The audience also heard inspiring remarks from two early learning champions, Carl Guardino, President and CEO of the Silicon Valley Leader-



Voices from the Field Panelists: Greg Robitaille, parent and Early Care and Education Advocate; Shaun Taylor, Assistant Director, Family Matters Child Care; Betty Robinson-Harris, CFT ECE Committee member and Preschool Teacher; Sandy Escobedo, Deputy Field Director, Preschool Advocacy Initiative, California Community Foundation.

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RAND releases fourth *California Preschool Study* in Sacramento

The fourth in a series of reports from RAND's *California Preschool Study* was released at a briefing in the State Capitol on May 28, 2009, and it shows how California can invest in a high-quality early learning system that will help close the state's achievement gap.

Coming at a crucial time in the state's efforts to close a massive budget gap, the report recommends creating a well-designed, coordinated plan to prepare teachers, while ensuring that high-quality programs are available to the children who need them most.

If we are to make progress in significantly boosting the quality of California's preschools and in closing the state's achievement gap, then it is critical that early childhood education programs (ECE) employ well-trained teachers and staff who are responsive to children's developmental needs.

At the briefing, facilitated by the Packard Foundation's Meera Mani, the



Dr. Lynn Karoly, center, briefs participants in Sacramento about details of the fourth RAND California Preschool Study.

study's lead researcher, Lynn Karoly, walked through many of the recommendations contained in the report, and said the study shows that the state can more efficiently spend its ECE dollars and get better results for children in the process.

Dr. Karoly also provided a broad overview of previous RAND preschool research which concluded that California has a significant achievement gap that is evident as early as kindergarten entry, and that high-quality preschool can help bridge the achievement gap.

Quality care and educa-

tion for California's children is paramount to the California Federation of Teachers (CFT). The CFT is working to provide each child with knowledgeable well-compensated program staff and educators as they work to move California to a place where all preschool-aged children have equal access to a high-quality early learning program.

Read more about the *California Preschool Study* and related items of interest by visiting www.cft.org and clicking on "Early Childhood" or the RAND or Preschool California websites.

Partnership for Growth—Report from Local 1475

Early Childhood Federation, Local 1475 is an affiliate of the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) based in Los Angeles (LA). The local consists of teachers, associate teachers and support staff who provide early childhood education (ECE) through Head Start (HS).

Over the years Local 1475 has seen many changes, from the lean years of the Bush administration to the current distribution of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act dollars. Throughout all of this, one thing has remained the same—the need for constant organizing of our members.

During the recent restructuring of HS in LA County we lost two of the agencies we represented, LACA and Federation HS, a major blow to our membership numbers due to the loss of those providers.

Last summer, we regrouped and put together an organizing blitz with the AFT, the CFT, and the help of ECE leaders and organizers from across the country. We talked to more than 600 workers over four days and shared our vision and plans for the profession. We recruited 34 new members to the union and we created a buzz in the ECE profession throughout LA County. The message was clear that the union wanted to give the power back to the professionals who do the real work of developing young minds.

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An executive summary of the study along with the full study and accompanying research brief are available at the following links:

Executive Summary

http://rand.org/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG889.sum.pdf

Research Brief

http://rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/2009/RAND_RB9452.pdf

Full Study

http://rand.org/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG889.pdf

Silicon Valley Leadership Group hosts forum - **Preschool: The Future of Our Workforce**

On June 2, 2009 the Silicon Valley Leadership Group hosted a business oriented forum regarding the issue of an integrated, quality preschool system and what it means to the Silicon Valley workforce. The forum focused on reviewing research, best practices and policy and also provided an opportunity for business leaders to create a network and to give feedback as to what they want to see happen



*Elaine Francisco and Sandra Weese at the Silicon Valley Leadership Group forum **Preschool: The Future of our Workforce.***

with preschool policy in California.

Highlights of the event included briefings on recent preschool research, panels with local business leaders and industry experts and discussions about potential preschool policy implications. Panelists included: Carl Guarmino, President & CEO, Silicon Valley Leadership Group; Jim Wunderman,

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Future*

California's Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee begins meeting

In 2007, Superintendent Jack O'Connell's P-16 council recommended reforming existing preschools to create the type of quality experience that will prepare children to read and learn. SB 1629, co-sponsored by Superintendent O'Connell, created the Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee (ELQISAC). The Advisory Committee is a new state advisory body that will develop the policy and implementation plan for an Early Learning Quality Improvement System (ELQIS) to improve the quality of early education programs. It is also charged with developing an early learning rating scale that includes features that most directly contribute to high

quality early care and education (ECE) and a funding model aligned with the quality rating scale.

These efforts are designed to improve outcomes for children and reduce California's school readiness gap by addressing the quality of our early learning and care programs. A broad partnership created the legislation (Senate Bill 1629 Steinberg) that established the ELQISAC. Over the next two years, the committee members and stakeholders across the state will redesign California's framework to improve the quality of early learning and care programs for children from birth to five years old. Development of the ELQIS will consider research, policies, program informa-

tion, and best practices at the national, state and local levels.

There have been two meetings of the ELQISAC which were devoted mainly to procedural issues regarding committee structure, the formation of sub-committees and information sharing. There was discussion about the scope of an ELQIS, its time line, and the necessary resources — or lack thereof — for beginning to move towards implementation. Several committee members suggested the possibility of launching a pilot program. Overall, the meetings achieved some initial provisional consensus that will allow the committee to begin to tease out program details. There seems to be general

agreement on the major areas of concern that any ELQIS must address and the committee established that it will draw heavily on existing models developed in other states.

The concrete work of fleshing out the program details will occur within in the five sub-committees, which are open to the public: Licensing, Quality Rating, and Improvement; Professional Development; Engagement and Outreach; Finance and Incentives; and Program Improvement and Research. We strongly encourage CFT ECE members who are interested in helping to shape this process to join one, or more, of the sub-committees.

If you are interested in participating in future

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CFT joins Los Angeles Preschool Advocacy Initiative

In 2007, the California Community Foundation (CCF), in partnership with the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, launched the Los Angeles Preschool Advocacy Initiative (LAPAI) as part of the foundation's civic engagement activities. This is a multi-year effort to increase access to quality preschool education for underserved communities and to support efforts that address the child care and development needs of children, ages 0-5.

The coalition is moving a countywide grassroots effort to build public support for quality preschool and early care and education (ECE). Coalition goals include: building a diverse stakeholder-based coalition; raising public awareness about the shortage of quality preschool and ECE programs and facilities; and developing policies that increase support for preschool and ECE reforms and funding.

Over the next few years, the coalition will engage civic and community leaders, parents, policymakers, and others to champion its

issues and serve as a connector between local and statewide preschool reform efforts.

In the long-term, the initiative will ensure that: children entering K-12 are ready for school; parents engage in their children's development and educational success throughout the K-12 years; and underserved communities have access to preschool facilities.

The California Federation of Teachers (CFT) has been invited to participate in the LAPAI and Sandra Weese, CFT ECE Project Director, along with Ramiro Hernandez, AFT National Representative assigned to work with Early Childhood Federation, Local 1475 in Los Angeles, have been attending the meetings. At the June meeting, Weese was asked to make a presentation to the coalition members about the CFT/AFT and the work of the ECE project. We look forward to participating in the LAPAI and engaging our Los Angeles area CFT ECE members in the work of the coalition.

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Future*

President and CEO, Bay Area Council; Ken Wilcox, President, SVB Financial; Ned Barnholt, KLA Tenor; Kris Perry, Executive Director First 5 California; and Chuck Weis, Superintendent of Schools, Santa Clara County.

Representing the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) at the forum were Elaine Francisco, CFT Early Childhood Education (ECE) Committee member, special education ECE teacher and community college professor; Sandra Weese, CFT ECE Project Director; and Glen Rosselli, CFT Packard grant consultant.

The forum was made possible with the help of the Packard Foundation and was co-sponsored by SVB Financial and Ken Wilcox. The following partners also contributed to the forum: Bay Area Council, Preschool California, San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce, The Silicon Valley Education Foundation, The Fremont Chamber of Commerce and the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce.

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The *CFT Early Educator* is produced by union workers in the CFT Field Representatives Union and the Office and Professional Employees International Union. 

It has been hard work and we have a long road ahead including bargaining several contracts and planning future organizing blitzes. However, this partnership for growth has proven to be a huge success with an increase of active members on several committees and an increase of over 175 new members who are taking back their profession and gaining a voice on the job.

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ship Group, and Kris Perry, Executive Director of First 5 California.

Thank you to the CFT ECE members who participated in Early Learning Advocacy Day and helped "Seize the moment for California's youngest children!"

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meetings, joining sub-committees or gaining more information about the ELQISAC, please visit the following California Department of Education web page: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/sb-1629committee.asp>

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After analyzing the organizing work that was done over the summer, we all agreed to continue and step up our organizing plan into the next year. This included the AFT providing us with a full time National Representative to help us focus on building our union, Ramiro Hernandez.