

# Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

DECEMBER 2011

## Time to Get Ready for Sacramento Safari

All of us on the Fourth District Advocacy Committee look forward to sharing our annual two-day Sacramento Safari with you on Monday, March 26, and Tuesday, March 27.

Sacramento Safari is a terrific opportunity to learn, to advocate, and to network. You will learn about issues facing our schools and our state government; you will advocate directly to California assembly members and senators from Orange County; and you will network with up to a hundred other Fourth District PTA members who share your interest and concern about the children of California and their schools.

Now is the time to have your unit or council vote to appoint you as a representative and approve the expenditure of funds for Sacramento Safari. Units and councils may send more than one representative. Attendees must be current PTA members and student attendees must be 18 years old or accompanied by a parent or guardian.

The fabulous Fourth District Advocacy Committee will provide you with two days of outstanding speakers, educational materials, leadership and direction for legislative visits, hotel accommodations, and meals.

You will need to secure your own flights and ground transportation.

**Participants may choose one of the following registration options:**

- \$265 Hotel Double Occupancy
- \$365 Hotel Single Occupancy (attendees selecting this option should pay the difference from their personal funds)

### Registration fees include:

- One night at the Embassy Suites, Sacramento
- Lunch and dinner on Monday
- Breakfast and lunch on Tuesday
- Conference materials

### Registration fees do NOT include:

- Airfare (Conference will begin at noon on Monday and end at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday)
- Ground Transportation
- Airport parking fees
- Dinner on Tuesday

## Calendar of Events

### Advocacy Roundtable

Friday, December 9, 10:30 a.m. to noon  
Capistrano Unified School District Education Center  
33122 Valle Road, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675  
Speakers: **Don Wagner**, Assembly Member, 70<sup>th</sup> District, and **Rick Simpson**, Deputy Chief of Staff to Assembly Speaker John Pérez

★ All PTA members are welcome.

### Advocacy Roundtable

Friday, January 20, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.  
Fountain Valley School District  
10055 Slater Avenue, Fountain Valley 92708  
Speakers to be announced.

★ All PTA members are welcome.

### **Orientation:**

Friday March 16, 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.  
Fountain Valley School District Board Room  
All participants should attend

The registration deadline is Friday March 2, or when the capacity of 100 participants is reached.

To register, please go to [www.fourthdistrictpta.org](http://www.fourthdistrictpta.org) and find Sacramento Safari under the Advocacy menu.

The registration form and emergency form can be submitted on-line (preferred) or by mail, but **your registration will not be complete until your check is received at the Fourth District PTA Office.**

## Visits to Local Legislators

Members of the Fourth District PTA Advocacy Team have held several productive meetings with local state senators and assembly members in their home offices, and more meetings are planned.

We have used these opportunities to describe our advocacy program and to talk about ways that we can work together on common goals.

If you would like to participate in any of these informative meetings, please contact Kim Anderson, Fourth District PTA Vice President for Advocacy, at [advocacy@fourthdistrictpta.org](mailto:advocacy@fourthdistrictpta.org)

## Common Core Standards are Coming to California Schools

Common Core Standards will be a topic of conversation in Sacramento and in school districts for the next several years. What are they and when will they be implemented?

In 1997, California adopted state academic standards, establishing an outline of what students are expected to learn at each grade level. Other states developed their own sets of standards. In 2009, the governors of 48 states (plus two territories and the District of Columbia) adopted Common Core State Standards in language arts and mathematics. The purpose was to create consistent expectations and assessments, to better prepare students for higher education and a global economy, and to allow for collaboration among states on best practices and professional development.

In California, a special commission selected additional standards to maintain the level of rigor in the state's educational program. The California State Board of Education approved the combined Common Core Standards in August, 2010.

California is now in the process of implementing those standards. This requires new curriculum frameworks, new instructional materials, teacher training and a state testing system aligned with the standards.

Due to budget constraints, the state has a moratorium on the development of new curriculum frameworks and adoption of new textbooks until the 2015-16 school year. However, seven school districts plan to take a leadership role in implementing the new standards. They are: Clovis, Fresno, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Sacramento City, San Francisco, and Sanger.

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## California State PTA Legislation Conference

The annual California State PTA Legislation Conference will take place on February 6 and 7 in Sacramento. All PTA members are invited to attend.

This is an opportunity to become informed about activities in the capitol affecting children and schools, learn about legislative issues that our State PTA advocates are working on, network with others across the state who share your concerns and goals and to meet with your legislators to advocate for PTA priorities and positions.

For more information, please go to: [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org)

AB 250, which was supported by PTA and signed by the governor, establishes a structure for implementing the new standards and accommodates districts that want to put them in place before 2015-16. It also postpones ending the STAR testing program until 2015 so that the state can adapt to potential changes in the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (currently known as No Child Left Behind).

A second bill signed into law, SB140, requires the State Department of Education to develop a list of supplemental instructional materials aligned with the Common Core Standards. This will also support the districts that plan to move ahead with implementation.

For more information about the Common Core Standards, go to the California Department of Education website, [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov), or EdSource, [www.edsource.com](http://www.edsource.com).

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## Elementary Students Are Not Learning Enough Science

California's elementary school students are not learning enough science and most of their teachers are not trained in science instruction. Those are among the conclusions of a recent survey commissioned by WestEd, an education think-tank in San Francisco.

The study found that only 10 percent of elementary students regularly receive hands-on science lessons. Two-thirds of elementary teachers say they do not feel prepared to teach science and 85 percent say they have not received any science training in the last three years. Sixty percent of school districts have no staff dedicated to elementary science.

The study concluded that teachers neglect science in favor of math and English because those are emphasized in high-stakes tests. California has high standards for science, but in the Academic Performance Index (API) science makes up less than 6 percent of a school's score, as opposed to about 57 percent for English.

California's Science standards will be updated during the next two years in response to SB 300, which was supported by PTA and signed by the governor. The bill requires the State Superintendent of Education to convene a group of science experts and hold at least two public hearings. The new science standards are to be approved by the State Board of Education by July 30, 2013.

For more information, go to [www.wested.org](http://www.wested.org).