

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT ADVOCACY TEAM

JANUARY 2010

Are you ready to Safari?

Our Fourth District PTA Safari team is ready to take you into the “wilds” of Sacramento! Our two-day annual adventure will be held March 22-23, 2010. Sacramento Safari featured speakers will include:

- ✓ Rick Miller, California Department of Education
- ✓ Mac Taylor, California State Legislative Analyst
- ✓ Debra Bowen, California Secretary of State (tentative)
- ✓ Jean Ross, Director of the California Budget Project
- ✓ Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee columnist
- ✓ Kevin Gordon, President, School Innovations and Advocacy
- ✓ Rick Simpson, Deputy Chief of Staff to Karen Bass
- ✓ Paul Navarro, Deputy Legislative Secretary to Governor Schwarzenegger
- ✓ Assembly Member Julia Brownley, Chairman of the Assembly Education Committee
- ✓ Senator Gloria Romero (tentative), chairman of Senate Education Committee
- ✓ Assembly Member Tom Torlakson (tentative), member of the Assembly Education Committee
- ✓ Jo A.S. Loss, President, California State PTA
- ✓ Debbie Look, Director of Legislation, Calif. State PTA
- ✓ Alison apRoberts, Media Manager California State PTA
- ✓ Paul Richman, Executive Director California State PTA



Sacramento Safari Orientation

9:30–11:00 a.m., Friday, February 26th
Fountain Valley School District Board Room

At this meeting, packets of essential information and schedule updates will be distributed. Attendance is strongly encouraged, and is especially vital to first-time attendees.

Location:

10055 Slater Avenue, Fountain Valley, CA 92708
(North of the 405 at Brookhurst exit & Slater)
Please park in garage beneath building – it's free!

Calendar of Events

Advocacy Roundtables:

Fridays, 9:30-11:00 a.m., OC Department of Education, Costa Mesa (200 Kalmus Drive, Bldg. D)

- April 16
- May 28

Arts Advocacy - Orange County Conference:

Monday, March 15, OC Performing Arts Center

Keynote speaker: Daniel Pink. To register, go to:

www.ocpac.org/home/Events/EventDetail.aspx?EventID=991

OC Education Coalition Call-to-Action meeting:

Thursday, February 11, 4 p.m., location TBD

Topic: March 4 OC Ed Coalition rally and “Fight for California’s Future” kick-off

State PTA Legislation Conference:

February 21-22, Embassy Suites Hotel, Sacramento

Connecting the Dots: *From Issues to Advocacy*

Register at www.capta.org – Advocacy/Leg.Conf.

EdSource Forum:

Friday, March 19, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Santa Clara Marriott

Sacramento Safari:

- Monday, March 22 – Tuesday, March 23
- Orientation: Friday, February 26

Advocacy Roundtable presents info on state and education budgeting

Local PTA members discussed key education issues with Lisa Kalustian, Chief Deputy Director for Governor Schwarzenegger, at Fourth District PTA’s *Advocacy Roundtable* program in January.

“Race to the Top” update

Kalustian discussed how the federal *Race to the Top* program prompted recent state education innovation and reforms. California is competing for national funding by making changes in how the state handles student standards and assessments; teacher retention and recruitment; use of data systems; and turning around low-performing schools.

California was not eligible for these funds in July because it could not match up its student test data to teacher and administrator job evaluations. This was addressed by the passage of SB19, which enabled the

Ask the Advocacy Team

If you have any questions concerning advocacy issues, please contact us at: advocacy@fourthdistrictpta.org.

Key PTA Links

www.fourthdistrictpta.org – Click on **Advocacy**
www.capta.org – Select from menu: **Programs and Services: Advocacy** and **Children's Issues: Legislation**
www.pta.org – Click on **Take Action**

linking of student and teacher data. Additional legislation – SB680, a bill which allows greater parent choice of school districts, and AB1130, to measure academic programs and track individual student progress over time – both helped to make California eligible to receive *Race to the Top* funds. Kalustian said that a decision should be announced in April about Phase One of the \$1 billion in *Race to the Top* funding, with applications for Phase Two coming June 1; she added that the governor will be seeking a Phase Three for the program.

Even though the state now qualifies for *Race to the Top* funds, it is still up to individual school districts to decide whether or not they want to apply for these funds, which are only granted once, spread out over a four-year period, and commit districts to meeting further eligibility, administrative, and reporting requirements.

State budget

Kalustian noted that California's overall economy has been made worse by our national and other economic troubles. The state had to make up for a \$60 billion shortage last year, and has to find another \$20 billion in the next 18 months. The governor's office is expecting a \$6.6 billion shortfall for the current budget year alone, which includes \$5 billion in legally-required spending. The governor has called for a legislative special session to deal with \$3 billion of this immediately.

Measures to address the problem include changes to state employee compensation (salaries, pensions, and overall payroll reductions); making changes in federal-state relationships (especially concerning money owed for MediCal/Medicare and special education expenses); and specific points that require spending reductions.

Kalustian highlighted the governor's claim that the proportion of cuts to education [\$2.4 billion over 18 months] is less than reductions in most other state programs. Some education changes being considered by the governor include not requiring that substitute teachers are rehired based on seniority; allowing 60 days to handle staffing changes after the state budget is adopted/amended (in order to prevent unnecessary layoff notices and rescissions); and allowing local boards to set standards for firing employees. Legislation enacted last year permits a shorter school year, down to 175 student days. The governor would like to reverse spending allocations so that no less than 10% is spent for higher education and no more than 7% goes to prisons. One key reform would be finding a way to fix California's rollercoaster funding that relies on capital gains taxes from those with the top incomes.

Advocacy Speakers Bureau



Do you have a Legislative or Advocacy representative in your council or unit?

Does your Council or Unit want someone to come out to your meeting and give a short presentation on an Advocacy topic?

Our highly trained speakers can come out and spend a few minutes at your PTA council or unit meeting to talk about:

- PTA and Advocacy:
 - Includes the history of PTA advocacy
 - Why legislation/advocacy should be a priority for units and councils
 - How Fourth District can help you!
- How education funding works in California
- Elections and PTA
- 10 things you can do to become a legislative advocate
- 5 simple things you can do to be an informed parent
- Any other topic you would like us to come talk about!

For details and to schedule a speaker, contact:

Shereen Walter

Fourth District PTA Speakers' Bureau Chairman
speakers@fourthdistrictpta.org

17-year-olds are now eligible to register to vote (at 18) in upcoming elections

You may register to vote if you are a U.S. citizen, a resident of California, and you are 18 years of age or will be 18 by the date of the next election. This is an important election year, with voters deciding on members of Congress and a number of statewide offices including Governor and Superintendent of Public Instruction.



The deadline to register to vote is 15 days before the date of the election. For the Primary Election on June 8, the deadline is May 24. For the General Election on November 2, the deadline is October 18.

You can download a voter registration form at www.sos.ca.gov/nvrc/fedform/ or you can pick one up at your county elections office, library, or U.S. Post Office. For more information on voter registration, visit www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_vr.htm.