

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT ADVOCACY TEAM

OCTOBER 2010

November Elections

What questions should be asked at a candidates' forum?

A candidates' forum allows concerned parents and other voters an opportunity to become better informed about their choices for elected representatives.

While all politics are local, there are some concerns that most PTA members have in common while serving to protect the interests and welfare of all children, youth, and families. Most candidates will say that they support public education. The real question is how far will that support go? A strong public education candidate:

- knows education policy; the federal, state, and local laws that govern public education; and the responsibilities of the desired office.
- makes public education a high priority in his or her political platform.
- solicits opinions and viewpoints from citizens.
- has a clear message about public education priorities.

To make the most of your opportunity to hear candidates' views and positions important to you, here are some ideas for questions you may want to ask:

♦ *What will you do to address the problems schools face with declining funding as they also try to meet the challenges of growing enrollments, children with special needs, and new educational technology?*

♦ *What specific plans would you recommend to support and improve public schools?*

♦ *What actions will you take to help reduce children's exposure to violence in schools, in their neighborhoods, and on television?*

♦ *What specific actions will you take to increase the role of parents in decision making and promote parental involvement in schools?*

♦ *If elected, what would you do to help address the childhood obesity problem?*

♦ *What will you do to help attract highly qualified teachers to our schools, given budget constraints?*

♦ *Do you believe that art and music are part of a quality education, and if so, what do you plan to do to make sure these programs remain in our schools?*

♦ *Between the hours of 3 - 6 p.m., many children and adolescents are left unsupervised at home. These hours are the peak hours for juvenile crime and other*



Calendar of Events

Advocacy Roundtables:

- Friday, November 5, 10:30–12 noon, Capo Ed Center (33122 Valle Rd., San Juan Capistrano)
- Friday, January 21, 9:30-11:00 a.m. FVUSD
- Friday, April 15, 9:30-11:00 a.m. FVUSD
Fountain Valley School District Board Room (10055 Slater Avenue, Fountain Valley, CA)

2011 Sacramento Safari:

- Monday, March 21 – Tuesday, March 22
Be sure to include this line item in your budget!
- **Orientation:** Friday, February 25, 9:30-11:00 a.m. at Fountain Valley School District Board Room

California's November 2nd General Election:

- Applications to vote-by-mail must be received by the Registrar of Voters by 5 pm on October 26th.
- Last day to register to vote is October 18th.
- Election Day: Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 2nd.
- ▶ Orange County Registrar of Voters – For local election details, see: www.ocvote.com.
- ▶ For California's Official Voter Information Guide, see www.sos.ca.gov.

WHAT'S NEW?

Go to www.capta.org to see the Special Election Edition of PTA in California.

destructive behaviors. What do you plan to do to address this problem?

♦ *What is your view on voucher programs that allow parents to use public funds to send their children to private schools?*

♦ *What does being a supporter of public education mean to you?*

When listening to a candidate, consider whether the candidate seems to have:

- a commitment to public education and its importance as a foundation for democracy;
- an understanding of the Constitutional principle of separation of church and state and its relevance to school district policy decisions;
- a position of respect and recognized involvement/ leadership in the community; and

- an unselfish interest in the public schools, in the community, and in every child.

A candidate who supports public education should support providing students with the tools and guidance they need to achieve academic success, and also should have a clear position on a wide range of children's issues. You might ask:

- ♦ *What is your position on the value and importance of public education?*
- ♦ *What are your top priorities for improving public education?*
- ♦ *What program proposals do you offer to support underserved children?*

Issues for school board candidates

Is the school board candidate:

- a resident of the school district?
- informed about school board functions, policies and responsibilities?
- familiar with the schools in the district and with the basic issues facing education?
- knowledgeable about the role of the school board as it relates to the administration of the school district?

Does the candidate:

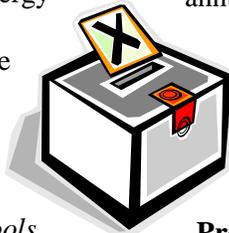
- know the boundaries and demography of the school district?
- know that leadership involves working with and understanding the needs, expectations, and concerns of the parent and business community?
- have an understanding of the legislative process?
- understand the commitment of time and energy required to be an effective school board member?

Strong education candidates understand the role the offices they seek play in public education and should be able to articulate what they will do to improve school quality. To examine this, consider asking:

- ♦ *How will you ensure that public schools operate effectively and that children achieve?*
- ♦ *How should teacher quality, and school and student performance be evaluated?*

A strong education candidate should have a viable plan for school funding. Try asking:

- ♦ *What is your opinion of current spending on public education, including funding for special needs and limited English proficient students?*
- ♦ *What changes will you make to the existing education funding structure?*
- ♦ *What programs and areas will you try to protect from budget cuts?*
- ♦ *Do you have any tax proposals to offer for public school funding?*



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**

Other key PTA issues to ask about include:

- ♦ *What is your position on bilingual education?*
- ♦ *Should the public fund vouchers for students to attend private or religious schools?*
- ♦ *What is your position on increasing funding to promote school construction and renovation, and to promote healthy schools?*
- ♦ *What are your plans for increasing parent involvement in education?*

While there is no single "correct" answer to these questions, the candidates' answers will shed light on the types of education decisions they will make if elected.

CAPTA positions on propositions

For the November 2010 statewide election, the California State PTA has adopted positions on three ballot measures:

Proposition 24: SUPPORT - Tax Fairness Act

By repealing recent changes to business taxes, which have yet to take effect, up to \$1.3 billion in additional annual general fund revenue is forecast. PTA believes that a balanced approach is needed to address California's budget deficits. Without additional revenues, further cuts to education and critical children's services will continue to impact the quality of education and children's general health, safety, and well-being.

Proposition 25: SUPPORT - Simple Majority Vote for State Budget.

Changes the legislative vote requirement necessary to pass the state budget from the current two-thirds to a simple majority. It also contains a provision whereby if the Legislature fails to pass a budget bill by June 15, all members of the Legislature will permanently forfeit any reimbursement for salary and expenses for every day until the budget bill is finally passed.

Proposition 19: NEUTRAL - Legalize and Regulate Marijuana

A thorough analysis determined that PTA does not have any relevant PTA authority, as directed by our members at conventions, to take a position on this measure.