

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

SEPTEMBER 2011

Why is PTA involved in Politics?

Many people think PTA exists only to raise money for schools. That has never been the case. PTA was founded in 1897 to address the way our country nurtures, protects and educates its children. Those concerns continue to be PTA's primary focus.

PTA members work hard to support their own schools, but they realize that *every* child deserves a healthy upbringing and a good education. This can only be accomplished by securing "adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth."

PTA carefully studies the facts and supports or opposes proposed laws or ballot measures that affect children and youth, based on the purposes and values of PTA and on resolutions approved by the membership. PTA members are encouraged to learn how the various levels of government function and to take action when children's issues are at stake.

PTA is active in political issues but is not partisan. PTA does not support or oppose any political party or any candidate for political office.

Plan Your Advocacy Year

Advocacy Roundtables

September 23, 9:30 a.m.
December 9, 10:30 a.m.
January 20, 9:30 a.m.
April 20, 9:30 a.m.

Council Legislative/Advocacy Chair Meetings

Fourth District PTA Office, 9:30 a.m.
October 11
November 4
February 24
March 16
May 25

Sacramento Safari

Orientation, March 16
Trip, March 26 and 27

More information about these events will be available in the *Advocacy Communicator*, *Orange Leaves*, Leg-Link and www.fourthdistrictpta.org.

Calendar of Events

Advocacy Training Roundtable

Friday, September 23, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Fountain Valley School District
10055 Slater Ave., Fountain Valley, 92708

★**Open to all PTA members. Training for both new and returning chairs will be offered.**

Council Legislative/Advocacy Chair Meeting

Tuesday, October 11, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Fourth District PTA Office

1520 Brookhollow Drive, Unit 40, Santa Ana 92705

★**All council legislative/advocacy chairs should attend, president should attend if council has no chair.**

Fourth District PTA's Advocacy Program

Advocating for our children, families and public schools is a vital part of Fourth District PTA's program. Our goal is to create a network of council and unit advocacy chairs to help inform our members about important issues and empower them to speak out on behalf of children and youth.

The Fourth District PTA Advocacy Committee (the "A-Team") provides programs, resources and activities to meet this goal. These include:

- Four **Advocacy Roundtables**, featuring expert speakers on a variety of topics. Open to all PTA members.
- **Sacramento Safari**, March 26-27, takes about 90 PTA members to Sacramento to learn about the issues and visit legislators' offices. (More on page 2)
- The *Advocacy Communicator*, for advocacy chairs to use and share. Published monthly, September through June, and available at www.fourthdistrictpta.org.
- **Speaker's Bureau**: A-Team members come to your meeting to talk about a variety of advocacy issues.
- **Leg-Link**, an online service to inform members about legislative activities and alert them when action is needed.. Sign up at www.fourthdistrictpta.org.
- **Advocacy Resource Notebooks** with information and resources for local advocates. May be purchased for \$10 at the Fourth District PTA office.
- New this year: **Council Legislative/Advocacy Chair Meetings** to discuss our advocacy programs, get feedback, and support local efforts.

Sacramento Safari: Bringing Our Voices to the State Capitol

What is it?

Sacramento Safari is Fourth District PTA's annual trip to our State Capitol. It is a unique opportunity to examine the issues that impact our schools, learn about the workings of our state government, and network with other Fourth District PTA parents. This year's Safari will take place March 26-27.

Why is it important?

Participants meet with California State PTA advocates and a variety of knowledgeable speakers, with time for questions and answers. Past speakers have included state legislators or their staff members, representatives from the California Department of Education, the Legislative Analyst, the California Secretary of State, and noted Sacramento journalists.

Appointments are set up for small groups to meet with individual legislators in their offices in the capitol building. It's an exciting, information-packed two-day experience!

How much does it cost?

The cost for the trip is about \$550, including hotel stay and travel expenses. Participants make their own travel arrangements. Single or double occupancy hotel reservations are arranged by Fourth District PTA. Housing and some Safari activities are at the Embassy Suites, 100 Capitol Mall, about a half mile from the State Capitol.

Who may participate?

Sacramento Safari participants must be appointed by a vote of a unit or council. Units and councils may send more than one representative. Attendees under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent.

How can I find out more?

Watch for Safari news at fourthdistrictpta.org and in upcoming issues of *Orange Leaves*, Fourth District PTA's monthly newsletter. Or sign up for Fourth District PTA *Leg-Link*

at the website or by sending an email with your name and PTA affiliation to leglink@fourthdistrictpta.org.

Don't Miss this Opportunity! Sacramento Safari costs are a legitimate PTA expense.

Plan to send a representative from your unit or council and include the costs in your PTA's annual budget.

Please remember that participants must be appointed by a vote of their PTA unit or council.



Where Can I Get the Information I Need to Be an Advocate?

The legislative process, school funding, common core standards, current issues and proposals — there's a lot to learn to become an informed, effective advocate.

Luckily, the Internet puts the information you need at your fingertips. Here are a few websites to get you started:

- www.pta.org
- www.capta.org
- www.fourthdistrictpta.org

Learn about national, state and district PTA legislative programs, positions and resources. At the Fourth District PTA website, sign up for **Leg-Link** to receive up-to-date news from Sacramento, action alerts when there is a need to communicate with legislators or the governor, announcements about Fourth District PTA advocacy events and the latest edition of the *Advocacy Communicator*.

- www.edsource.org

EdSource is a trusted non-partisan source of information

on public school issues. A good place to start is "California's System," which explains how our state's public schools are funded.

- www.lao.ca.gov

The California State Legislative Analyst's Office prepares non-partisan reports on a variety of issues for legislators and policy makers. Look for the tutorial webcast on Prop. 98, an excellent introduction to this important aspect of public school funding.

- www.ed-data.k12.ca.us

The Educational Data Partnership provides basic information and statistics about California schools at the state, county, school district and school levels. It also offers a helpful glossary of education terms.

- www.senate.ca.gov

The official website of the California State Senate includes a "Citizen's Guide" with information about the lawmaking process and a glossary of legislative terms.

The Advocacy Communicator is published by the Fourth District PTA Advocacy Team and is intended for distribution to local PTA units and councils. Celia Jaffe—President; Kim Anderson—Vice President, Advocacy; Gisela Meier—Editor. 1520 Brookhollow Drive, #40, Santa Ana, CA 92705 (714) 241-0495 www.fourthdistrictpta.org