

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

JUNE 2012

Participate in the Next Phase of *Our Children, Our Future* Campaign

The campaign for the *Our Children, Our Future* (OCOF) initiative turned in more than 848,000 signatures and fully expects it to qualify for the November ballot.

The initiative would raise about \$10 billion per year, to be allocated directly to K-12 public schools, early childhood education and (initially) school bond debt.

Fourth District PTA played a big role in this effort, collecting the most signatures of any PTA district in the state. Thank you to every one who circulated petitions, gathered signatures and turned in completed petitions.

We can also participate in the next phase of the campaign: making sure people are registered to vote and educating them about the ballot measure.

The lack of school funding is on the minds of many and frequently comes up in social conversations. If it doesn't come up, you can be the one to mention your concerns about the many things our public schools have lost: arts, music, PE, counselors, nurses, and smaller class sizes. Talk about OCOF and how it will make a huge difference.

Here are some key points:

- Over the past three years, public schools have been cut by more than \$20 billion and have lost more than 40,000 teachers. Talk about how this has impacted your school.
- OCOF will allocate money directly to *every* California K-12 public school. The governor and legislature are prohibited from using the money or directing how it is spent.
- It's all about local control and transparency! Local districts and school communities will decide how the money is spent and must report results to the public.
- During the first four years, 30 percent of the funding will be used to pay off the state's school bond debt, providing relief for the state's General Fund.
- Tell people how much money their local school will receive by showing them the Benefits Calculator at www.ourchildrenourfuture2012.org, or encourage them to visit the site themselves.

If you would like to get more involved, the OCOF campaign is looking for PTA members to serve as grassroots activists. These "PTA Superstars" would act as local

Calendar of Events

Primary Election ★ Remember to vote!
Tuesday, June 5

Advocacy Training

Friday, September 21, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Fountain Valley School District
10055 Slater Avenue, Fountain Valley 92708

★ **All PTA members are welcome to attend. All unit and council legislative chairs are encouraged to do so.**

and state-wide spokespeople for the campaign, mobilize parents, students, local, and district PTA members and elected officials in support of the initiative and participate in statewide campaign events as "the voice of the PTA."

The campaign will provide media training and ongoing support. If you are interested, please contact Ariana Sexton at sexton@prandcompany.com

IMPORTANT: If you are planning to discuss OCOF at PTA meetings held at your school, please be sure to get a Facilities Use Permit first. Check with your principal or school district office for the application procedure.

Prepare for Another Year of Fourth District PTA Advocacy

Another exciting and important year of advocacy awaits us after the summer vacation. Here is some information to help you prepare.

The **Advocacy Training Roundtable** will be held on September 21, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Fountain Valley School District. There will be separate beginning and advanced sessions. This event is free and open to all PTA members.

Additional **Advocacy Roundtables** will be held on November 30, January 25 and April 26.

Sacramento Safari 2013 is scheduled for March 18 and 19. Ask your PTA to include about \$600 (includes transportation costs) in next year's budget for each person you plan to send to Safari.

If you will not be returning as the legislative chair for your PTA, please pass on this information and all of your advocacy materials to the new chair.

There's More Bad News in Governor Brown's May Revise Budget

Governor Brown recently issued his new version of the proposed state budget (the "May Revise"), based on actual, rather than anticipated, tax receipts. As expected, the news was bad.

The state now faces a two-year budget shortfall of \$15.7 billion, up from \$9.2 billion, due to tax collections that were lower than expected. According to the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) that number should be about \$900 million higher because the Governor has overestimated the amount of property taxes that will come from the former redevelopment agencies.

Governor Brown continues to assume that his ballot measure will be approved by voters in November and that it will raise about \$8.5 billion. The initiative would increase income tax rates for seven years for individuals making more than \$250,000, and couples making more than \$500,000. It also would increase the statewide sales tax by a half-cent per dollar for four years.

The Governor proposes to resolve the budget shortfall through \$8.3 billion in cuts to Medi-Cal, CalWorks, in-home care, child care, the courts and college financial aid. He also is asking for \$2.5 billion in fund shifts, loan payment deferrals, borrowing from special funds, and other onetime measures. With the additional money from his initiative, the governor says this plan will leave the state with a \$1 billion reserve by the end of 2012-13.

Like the Governor's previous proposed budget, the May Revise would leave K-12 funding flat.

If the initiative is not approved by voters, the Governor proposes automatic midyear trigger cuts of \$6.1 billion. Most of that would be in the form of \$5.5 billion in reductions from K-12 education and community colleges. The remainder would be cut from other state programs, including universities, social services, forestry, flood control, park rangers and lifeguards, and law enforcement.

The remaining \$2.8 billion would be real cuts to upcoming school budgets. This would be accomplished by shifting the General Fund cost of debt service on state school bonds into Prop. 98 without a commensurate increase in Prop. 98 funding to pay for it. Other school funding would then need to be cut to make room within Prop. 98 for the cost of these debt service payments.

"Schools will be provided flexibility to reduce the school year by a combined total of 15 day in 2012-13 and 2013-14. This will allow schools to use a combination of reserves, reductions in the school year and other savings options to absorb this cut over a two year period," the Revise states.

The LAO issued an analysis of the May Revise that suggests alternatives to both the Governor's basic budget plan and the K-14 trigger cuts.

The alternative to the basic budget would maintain programmatic spending at the same level as the Governor's proposal, but would reduce K-14 funding by cutting the amount of deferrals the state repays, reducing funding for low-performing schools, postponing implementation of Transitional Kindergarten and eliminating the Early Mental Health Initiative. The LAO's calculations would reduce the Prop. 98 minimum guarantee by \$1.7 billion.

The LAO also has an alternative plan for the trigger cuts if the Governor's initiative fails. School districts and community colleges would be cut \$1 billion, or \$162 per student, instead of \$2.8 billion, or \$415 per student, under the LAO plan.

"All of this is dense stuff that is nearly indecipherable," wrote John Fensterwald at TOP-Ed.com. "It offers further evidence for the failure of how California finances state government and schools in particular."

- Read the May Revise at: www.ebudget.ca.gov/
- The Legislative Analyst's report can be read at: www.lao.ca.gov

Governor Changes Proposal For Weighted Student Formula

Governor Brown's original budget called for replacing the current school funding system with a Weighted Student Formula. School districts and charter schools would receive a base amount for each pupil, plus an additional amount for low-income students and English language learners.

The May Revise retains this recommendation with some changes. Implementation would be over seven years, instead of five, beginning in 2012-13. The base amount would vary for four different grade spans, and the weight factor for low-income students and English learners would be 20 percent of the base instead of 37 percent.

The California Education Coalition, which includes California State PTA, continues to oppose the implementation of a Weighted Student Formula at this time of financial uncertainty. Without an influx of new funding, many school districts would be losers in the redistribution of funds. The Coalition believes that this decision should be carefully considered and discussed at public hearings before implementation, rather than being quickly passed as part of a budget.