Talking Points for December 2012

Details are in the December issue of the *Advocacy Communicator*.

* There is finally some good news for public schools. According to a recent report by the Legislative Analyst’s Office, there won’t be additional school funding this year, but we also won’t see the mid-year budget cuts that were threatened. Starting next fiscal year, funding for schools is expected to increase by $2 billion to $3 billion every year, through 2017-18. The LAO says this is due to the passage of Propositions 30 and 39, the improving economy, and previous budget cuts.
* The next business session of the state legislature begins on January 7 and lawmakers will be looking at some big issues that impact public schools. These include:
* The implementation of the new Common Core State Standards that were adopted by California and 44 other states. This will require new instructional materials, teacher training and a new testing system. The state is working on all of that now.
* California is also working with several other states to develop a new standardized test to go with the new Common Core Standards. The new test will be taken by students online and is supposed to be ready by 2015, when the STAR test expires. It doesn’t look like everything will be ready by then, and the state will have to decide how to deal with that.
* In his last budget proposal, Gov. Brown wanted to completely change how schools are funded by establishing a weighted student formula. Schools would get a set amount for each student, plus an additional amount for English learners and low-income students. The idea was dropped from the last budget, but the governor is expected to present something similar in his next budget proposal.
* The Advocacy Roundtable on January 25 looks exciting. Jacque Chevalier from National PTA will talk about education news from Washington DC. It’s free and everyone is invited.
* Registration for Sacramento Safari opens soon. Who are we going to send?