

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

NOVEMBER 2013

State testing stopped as California shifts to Common Core Standards

California students will not take state standardized tests this school year as the state transitions to Common Core State Standards and the coinciding assessments.

Governor Brown signed legislation in September that terminated the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting program. The bill, AB 484 (Bonilla) was supported by California State PTA.

In spring 2014 students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 will take trial-run computerized Common Core tests, with half of the students testing in math and half in English. The purpose of these tests is to evaluate test questions. The results will not be reported to parents, schools or the federal government. The computer-based tests will be adaptive, meaning they will adjust the difficulty of questions in response to a student's answers. They will also require students to write more and show the thinking behind their answers.

AB 484 was passed and signed in spite of threats to withhold federal funding by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who stated that AB 484 violates the testing and accountability provisions of the federal No Child Left Behind Law. It is unclear whether Duncan will follow through on the threat. California school districts receive about \$5 billion in federal funding per year, or about 10 percent of their annual budgets.

AB 484 gives the state two years to create a master plan for future state tests and an unspecified period after that to implement the plan.

What state tests will be suspended in the 2013-14 school year?

- California Standards Tests (CSTs) in English language arts and math in all grades (grade 11 would be voluntary for college placement purposes), including end-of-course tests in middle and high schools in algebra I, algebra II, geometry, general math and integrated math.
- All history tests (8th grade, U.S. history and world history).
- End-of-course high school science tests in biology, chemistry, physics and integrated science.
- CSTs in Spanish given to English learners, although districts can offer the tests at their own expense.
- Starting next year, standardized math or English language arts tests won't be offered for 2nd graders,

though districts can choose to continue to offer them, at state expense.

What tests will be given in spring 2014?

- All districts will give every student the field test for the new Common Core standards in either math or English language arts. The results won't be reported to parents or schools.
- Districts without the technology to give the field test will not test students in language arts or math.
- Students will continue to take state science tests in grades 5, 8 and 10, as required by federal law.
- The high school exit exam will be given.
- Alternative tests for disabled students will be given in some grades.

What will be given in spring 2015?

- The official Common Core tests in English language arts and math in grades 3 through 8 and 11. Schools and parents will get the results of those tests.
- Districts have the option of giving Common Core tests with paper and pencil for the first three years.
- Science tests in grades 5, 8 and 10 will be given, as will the high school exit exam.

Register now for Sacramento Safari

One of the highlights of our advocacy year is Sacramento Safari, our annual two-day trip to the state Capitol. This year's Safari is scheduled for March 17 and 18.

Participants will hear from a variety of experts in public education policy and state government. Past speakers have included state legislators, the Legislative Analyst, representatives from the California Department of Education and veteran Sacramento journalists.

This is followed by pre-arranged small group visits to the offices of our local legislators in the Capitol.

The cost for the trip is about \$600, including hotel stay and travel expenses. This is a legitimate PTA expense. Participants must be appointed by a vote of a PTA unit or council.

Registration is open at www.fourthdistrictpta.org under Advocacy. PTA members are encouraged to register early, as there is a limit of 90 participants. Flight arrangements must be made independently.

Academic Performance Index is likely to disappear and then change

Among the many changes happening in California's education system this year are revisions to the state's school accountability process.

AB 484 (Bonilla) gives the State Board of Education the power to suspend the Academic Performance Index (API) for the next two years. This is likely to happen, and when the API comes back, it will be a different measure than it has been up to now.

The API is California's method for evaluating schools and school districts and ranking them among similar schools. In the past, it was based entirely state standardized test scores. AB 484 suspended those tests so that schools can transition to Common Core State Standards and the new testing system connected to them.

Also impacting the API is SB 1458 (Steinberg), which was supported by PTA and passed and signed by the governor last year. This new law requires standardized test scores to account for no more than 60 percent of high school APIs and at least 60 percent of elementary and middle schools scores. It also requires the API to include indicators such as graduation rates and college and career readiness factors.

Some education experts believe the API will be superseded by accountability provisions in the Local Control Funding Formula, which sets up its own a list of state priorities that must be used when school districts develop their budgets and Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP). The priorities are:

- **Student achievement**, including performance on standardized tests, API scores, college and career readiness, English proficiency and AP pass rates.
- **Student engagement**, including attendance, dropout and graduation rates.
- **Other student outcomes**, such as performance on other exams.
- **School climate**, including suspension and expulsion rates and other local measures.

- **Parental involvement**, including efforts to seek parental input, promotion of parental involvement and parent advisory committees.
- **Basic services**, such as credentialed teachers, instructional materials and facilities.
- **Implementation of Common Core State Standards for all students**, including English language learners.
- **Access to a broad curriculum** for all students.

The State Board of Education has been charged with creating a template for the LCAP. California State PTA has two representatives on the Implementation Working Group that is developing regulations to ensure transparency, accountability and parent involvement.

Advocacy Roundtable

A bipartisan look at California's public education policy

Rick Simpson

Deputy Chief of Staff to Assembly Speaker John Pérez
and

Senator Mark Wyland

38th District

Friday, November 15

10:30 a.m. to 12 noon

Fountain Valley School District, Board Room
10055 Slater Ave., Fountain Valley, 92708
(Please park at the back of the building, not in the front)

All PTA members are welcome to attend.

Questions? Please contact Fran Sdao at
roundtables@fourthdistrictpta.org

Stay in touch with PTA Advocacy

Legislative Alerts from California State PTA provide updates on current measures and issues that affect children and youth, and provide opportunities to take action in support of PTA positions.

The **Sacramento Update** provides news from the California State PTA Legislation Team on state and federal legislation issues that affect California's children and youth.

To sign up, go to *Publications* at www.capta.org and click on *Subscribe Now*.

Be sure to sign up for **Fourth District PTA LegLinks** at www.fourthdistrictpta.org under *Publications Signup*.

Governor vetoes teacher dismissal bill

A state bill designed to simplify the teacher dismissal process was vetoed by Governor Brown in October.

AB 375 was authored by Assembly Member Joan Buchanan (one of the speakers at last year's Sacramento Safari) and was supported by California State PTA.

"I share the author's desire to streamline the teacher discipline process, but this bill is an imperfect solution," Governor Brown wrote in his veto statement. "I encourage the Legislature to continue working with stakeholders to identify changes that are balanced and reduce procedural complexities."

The Advocacy Communicator is published by the Fourth District PTA Advocacy Team and is intended for distribution to local PTA units and councils. Maureen Christensen—President; Shereen Walter—Vice President, Advocacy; Gisela Meier—Editor.
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