

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

DECEMBER 2013

PTA advocacy is also local

PTA advocacy doesn't happen only in Sacramento and Washington DC. You can also take action on behalf of PTA in your own school district, city or county.

One example of this involves the issue of social hosting – adults serving alcohol in their homes to teenagers who are not their children or knowingly allowing underage drinking parties in their homes.

Orange Community Council PTA (in Fourth District) wrote a resolution titled “Social Host Accountability and Underage Drinking,” which calls on all levels of PTA to publicize the detrimental effects of underage drinking and to support legislation that would outlaw social hosting. The resolution was approved by delegates at the 2009 California State PTA Convention.

Huntington Union Council (HUC) PTA became actively involved in this issue at the local level. PTA leaders urged the Huntington Beach City Council to pass a social hosting ordinance. After the measure was enacted, Edison High School PTSA presented an information meeting with a panel of experts to explain the ordinance and the dangers of underage drinking. Last year, PTSAs at two HUC high schools distributed information in their first day packets and asked parents to sign a pledge not to serve alcohol to teens in their homes. Nearly 2,000 parents have signed the pledge.

Garden Grove, Irvine, La Habra, Laguna Beach, Laguna Hills, Mission Viejo and Orange also have passed ordinances establishing fines or misdemeanor offenses for adults who allow underage drinking in their homes.

The Orange County Board of Supervisors is currently considering a social hosting ordinance for unincorporated areas of the county. Shereen Walter, Fourth District Vice President for Advocacy, has been authorized by a vote of the Executive Committee to submit a letter in support of the ordinance and to speak on behalf of Fourth District at the December 17 Board of Supervisors meeting.

PTA action can also focus on a school district issue. In 2008, Top of the World Elementary PTA in the Laguna Beach Council became concerned over the length of time students spent on homework. After conducting research, the PTA wrote a resolution and the PTA president presented it to the school board. At a subsequent meeting, the school board adopted a policy restricting the amount of homework time at each grade level.

Calendar of Events

Advocacy Roundtable

Friday, January 24, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Fountain Valley School District Board Room
10055 Slater Avenue, Fountain Valley
★Open to all PTA members.

California State PTA Legislative Conference

January 27 and 28, in Sacramento
For more information, go to www.capta.org

A brief guide to local PTA action

- PTA units, councils and districts are encouraged to take action at a local level on resolutions passed at a State PTA Convention or on positions adopted by State PTA.
- Advocacy positions taken by the California State PTA Board of Managers are based on the five Purposes of PTA, the Legislation Platform (approved by convention delegates every other year), and resolutions passed by convention delegates.
- “While unit, council and district PTAs are not required to work actively for any position, they should not officially oppose a stand taken by the State Board of Managers.” (*California State PTA Toolkit, 4.2.5g*)
- A unit, council or district can take action on a local issue “if such action fits within the framework of the Purposes of PTA and Legislation Platform, adheres to PTA policies, and affects the well-being of children and youth.” (*Toolkit, 4.2.5j*)
- Before taking action, a local PTA should study the issue and the likely results of the requested change, inform all of the PTA units or councils that would be affected, and take a vote to approve the action.
- For more information, go the Advocacy section of the *Toolkit* or www.capta.org.

Sacramento Safari 2014 March 17-18

Register today at www.fourthdistrictpta.org
Registration fees go up on January 24

Don't be left behind!

State budget situation is more promising than expected, LAO says

“We now find that California’s state budget situation is even more promising than we projected one year ago.” So said the Legislative Analyst’s Office in a Fiscal Outlook issued last month.

The LAO predicts the state’s General Fund surplus will increase from \$5.4 billion in 2014-15 to almost \$10 billion in 2017-18, assuming there is no recession and spending remains relatively flat.

Next year the Prop. 98 funding guarantee for K-12 and community colleges will be \$7.7 billion above this year’s level, the LAO predicts. Governor Brown has already said that much of this would go to repaying some of the \$6.2 billion in Prop. 98 funding that was owed to school districts but “deferred” during the recent financial crisis. Since this is money that districts have already borrowed and spent, the repayments will not increase local budgets. The state also owes school districts \$4.8 billion in reimbursements for the cost of state mandates.

There still could be bigger budgets for schools next year. The LAO is suggesting a \$4 billion increase for K-12 per pupil funding. For districts with high percentages of low-income students, foster youth and English learners, this could mean \$800 or more per student under the provisions of the new Local Control Funding Formula.

The state’s budgetary condition is stronger than at any time in the past decade, but caution is still in order, the LAO says. California has a volatile tax system that is vulnerable to a downturn in the economy. There are huge retirement liabilities to contend with, particularly those related to the California State Teachers’ Retirement System. Spending increases also could reduce the surplus.

The LAO recommends building a strong reserve, paying off the state’s debts, setting aside funds for retirement liabilities, and allocating amounts each year for inflation, program restorations and other purposes. Governor Brown has indicated that he will continue to push for a conservative approach to the budget.

Proposed Local Control Funding Formula rules are controversial

The new Local Control Funding Formula provides the same amount of per pupil funding to every school district in the state, with additional funding going to districts with children who are low-income, English learners or in foster care. School districts have considerable flexibility in how they spend those funds, but they must come up with a plan and they must show that the additional funds for high needs students actually benefit those students.

It sounds simple, but deciding how this new system will function is turning out to be a complex issue.

The legislation that created LCFF assigned the task of working out the details to the State Board of Education. Draft regulations propose three ways districts could account for their additional revenue:

- Spend more in proportion to the increased funding.
- Provide more services, programs and resources for high needs children.
- Document higher achievement by targeted students.

At its meeting in November the board spent five hours listening to opposing viewpoints on the matter. School superintendents and administrators asked for as much flexibility as possible, while parents and advocates for low income children expressed concern that districts would find ways of spending the money without benefiting high needs students.

A few weeks after the meeting, the State Board received a letter from six state legislators, including Senate

President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg and Assembly Speaker John Pérez. The letter asked for specific regulations to ensure that additional funding is spent on services for high needs students.

“If statutory changes are needed to realize the promise of the LCFF, we are prepared to make them,” the letter stated.

The board members will take up the matter again at their January meeting. The board is required to adopt the spending regulations by January 31.

Source: John Fensterwald, www.edsource.org

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Roundtable

Learning with Technology: iPads to Online Classes

Friday, January 24

9:30 to 11:30 am

Fountain Valley School District

10055 Slater Ave, Fountain Valley

Open to all PTA members

