

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

APRIL 2014

A positive school climate leads to higher student achievement

School climate—how students, teachers and parents feel about their school—has been the focus of renewed attention during the past several years.

School climate refers to conditions that impact student achievement, including attitudes, safety, health, and relationships between students and teachers.

A negative climate includes factors such as chronic absence, bullying, gang activity, substance abuse and disengaged students. A positive climate is characterized by motivated students, a cooperative atmosphere, and a focus on rigor and relevance.

There is a strong correlation between a positive school climate and high API scores, education experts say. Even high-performing students do better in a good school climate.

School climate is one of the eight state priorities that must be included in each school district's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

In 2010, California was one of 11 states to receive a federal Safe and Supportive Schools grant to measure conditions of learning and to implement improvements in 58 school districts. In addition to increasing academic outcomes, a better school climate was found to improve students' mental health, attendance, behavior and graduation rates. Staff reported higher levels of job satisfaction.

The state Department of Education has a *California School Climate, Health and Learning System* (CalSCHLS) with surveys for students, staff and parents to assess conditions at their schools. The Safe and Supportive Schools website offers resources to help improve school climate.

For more information, go to:

- www.cde.ca.gov/lss/ss/se/safesupportive.asp
- www.californiaS3.wested.org



Sacramento Safari 2014

Eighty Orange County PTA members learned about current hot topics in education from State Department of Education staff, elected leaders and other experts during two days in the Capitol. Participants then split into groups to visit legislator offices and talk about PTA issues.

A detailed report from the Safari is available at www.fourthdistrictpta.org under Advocacy.

EdSource Symposium at Convention

This year's EdSource Symposium will again be held in conjunction with the California State PTA Convention in Los Angeles.

The forum will focus on the implementation of Common Core State Standards, a new statewide testing program and a new accountability system under the Local Control Funding Formula.

The symposium will be held Wednesday, May 7, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at the Los Angeles Convention Center. The \$58 registration fee includes a continental breakfast. Attendance at the conference is free for PTA members who register for convention and do not wish to include breakfast.

For more information, go to www.edsource.org.

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Roundtable

Local Control and Accountability Plans in Orange County

Special Guest: Dr. Jeffrey Hittenberger

Chief Academic Officer, OC Department of Education

Find out how our local school districts are implementing LCAP.

Friday, April 4 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Orange County Department of Education
Building A, Board Room
200 Kalmus Drive, Costa Mesa

All PTA members are welcome to attend.
Questions? Please contact Fran Sdao at roundtables@fourthdistrictpta.org

Advocacy Workshops at the California State PTA Convention

This year's California State PTA Convention will offer several workshops on advocacy topics, including two presented by Fourth District PTA Advocates!

Keep in mind that you can register for one or two days if you would like to attend only specific workshops.

Workshop C-8—Effective Child Advocacy at the Local Level. Create an effective advocacy effort at your local school or in your community. Identifying and reaching your target audience, developing key talking points, and creating a coalition of allies.

Workshop C-12—How to Get the Schools Our Kids Need. We will look at the big picture of school improvement and explore ways your PTA can use a new Stanford University online course to address local issues. Leave feeling better equipped as a parent and leader to participate in district decisions in this new era of local control.

Workshop C-11—Build Stronger Family-School Connections with School Smarts. CAPTA's School Smarts Parent Engagement Program connects families and schools. Learn from this program how to promote inclusiveness at your elementary school, equip parents with knowledge of the education system, and help parents to help their child and to be advocates for all children.

Workshop D-3—Local Control Funding Formula – It's a Revolution (Part 1). There's a revolution in how schools are funded, and parents are key players in this new system. This session will give you an overview of what has changed and what is to come.

Workshop E-3—Local Control Accountability Plan – It's an Opportunity (Part 2). From now on, school districts must engage parents as active partners in developing a vision, setting priorities, and linking budgets to goals and outcomes. How can you and your PTA ensure parents are engaged and heard? What will equip you to be the best advocates you can be for all kids?

Workshop E-4—Who Decides and How? School Boards, School Site Councils and You. How are decisions at your school and in your school district made, and who makes them? Learn how to make sure your voice is heard in decision-making processes and your role in school district governance. Also, learn how to develop strong partnerships between school boards, School Site Councils and PTAs.

Workshop E-8—HOT TOPICS: Get the Inside Scoop on Key Issues in Sacramento! What's happening in the State Capitol? How will pending legislation impact children, families and education in California? Get the answers to these, and many other questions about California politics and policy, as we hear directly from leading experts. Join us for this popular workshop.

Workshop E-9—Thinking of Running for Office? PTA Leaders Get Elected! Presented by Fran Sdao

Many PTA leaders take their experience and passion to the next level by serving on school boards and in state and national legislatures. PTA leaders who have run for office will tell you how they decided to run, how you can organize a campaign, and what to expect when elected.

Workshop F-10—Creating Powerful Advocacy Leaders, Presented by Kathy Moffat and Shereen Walter

A step-by-step strategy to becoming a highly effective advocacy chair at your unit/council/district including how to recruit, encourage, inspire and maintain relationships with other legislative leaders. Create an advocacy program which will result in your members being passionate and engaged in working to effect change for every child.

Edison High School PTSA advocacy convinces local retailer

In a demonstration that local advocacy can make a difference, the Edison High School PTSA convinced a local store to stop selling clothing emblazoned with marijuana leaves.

One of the members of the Youth Matters PTSA subcommittee noticed the clothing when she was shopping with her child at Tilly's in Huntington Beach. The subcommittee members launched a letter-writing campaign and the store quickly agreed to remove the clothing from its merchandise.

The Youth Matters subcommittee organizes education and outreach to prevent drug and alcohol abuse among teenagers.

"We did not approach in anger, but shared facts and concerns on the growing rate of younger children using drugs," said Kim Green, Youth Matters chair. "There's no need to be afraid to reach out and teach someone, especially on behalf of youth."