

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

SEPTEMBER 2014

PTA and the General Election

The General Election will be held November 4. In many school districts this will include school board elections and campaigns for school bonds. Will your PTA be involved?

Here are a few points to remember:

- PTA is nonpartisan and does not support or oppose candidates for office. However, it is very appropriate for a PTA to help inform voters by sponsoring candidate forums.
- **As an individual, you may endorse a candidate but do not use your PTA title.** This is important to maintain PTA's nonpartisan stance and to protect our non-profit status.
- PTAs may, with a vote of the membership, choose to support a school bond.

Learn more by attending the **PTA and Elections** at the Fourth District PTA Fall Workshops on September 10. The session will be offered only at 9:30 a.m.

You can also find lots of information at www.fourthdistrictpta.org under Advocacy.

Advocacy Training Roundtable

Friday, September 26

9:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

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

- ★ How to be an effective advocate for children.
- ★ Introduction to **Ed 100**, a free online course on California's changing education system.
- ★ Breakout sessions:
 - Council advocacy leadership training.
 - Advocacy in action for units.

All PTA members are welcome to attend. Every unit and council should send at least one representative.

Questions? Contact Fran Sdao at roundtables@fourthdistrictpta.org

Bills supported by California State PTA are signed into law

The California legislature wrapped up its session at the end of August. The following bills were supported by California State PTA and were signed into law by the Governor.

AB 215 (Buchanan) School employees: dismissal or suspension: hearings. Includes egregious misconduct, as defined, as a basis for dismissal of a teacher and revises the dismissal process.

AB 230 (Maienschein) Youth athletic programs: background checks. Requires a community youth athletic program, beginning January 1, 2016, to provide written notice of its criminal background check policy to the parent or guardian of any youth participating in the program.

AB 2127 (Cooley) Interscholastic sports: full-contact football practices: concussions and head injuries. Limits full contact athletic practices during pre season and competitive seasons to reduce head injury and cumulative effects of concussions

AB 2560 (Bonilla) Teacher credentialing: applications: child abuse reporting. Requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing for the issuance or renewal of teaching or services credentials, to require an applicant to read and attest by signature a statement that the applicant understands the duties imposed on a holder of a teaching credential or a services credential by the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act. School employees must read a statement that outlines the responsibilities as a mandated reporter.

AJR 31 (Skinner) Child nutrition programs: school meals. Declares that the Legislature supports federal standards for healthy meals, and urges the President and the Congress to ensure that reimbursement rates for school meals are funded. It also asks for an eligibility scale relative to the cost of living in a region.

SCR 86 (Hueso) Heavy school backpacks. Acknowledges the health risks that heavy backpacks pose to schoolchildren and recommends certain measures to be taken in that regard to avoid injury.

State drops school construction bond; rainy day fund is on ballot

A \$4.3 billion school construction bond that was intended for the November ballot was approved by the State Assembly and three Senate committees, but was pulled by the author because Gov. Jerry Brown made it clear that he would veto the measure.

AB 2235, by Assembly Member Joan Buchanan, had the support of California State PTA as well as other education, labor, and business groups.

The Governor has been critical of the state school construction program for several years. He says the system is overly complex, cumbersome and costly, and encourages districts to build more facilities than they need. He is also concerned about adding to the state's \$76 billion debt. He has suggested that the state should not be involved in school facilities funding and that a new system should be developed to give school districts "appropriate local control and fiscal incentives." Buchanan disagrees and says the ultimate decision on this issue "may rest with the courts."

Voters passed a \$10.4 billion school facilities bond in 2006, but that funding has been depleted. School districts have the option to raise developer fees for new construction, which would increase the cost of new homes.

The November ballot will include Prop. 2 (the new title given by the state legislature to Prop. 44). This measure would create a general rainy day fund for the state, with a separate "Prop. 98 Reserve" for public education. If approved by voters, the measure would require the state to deposit certain percentages of state revenues into each of these funds and to pay down the state's debt. In a fiscal downturn, the fund could be used to maintain services.

California State PTA is neutral on this proposition.

If Prop. 2 is approved by voters, the legislature will put a cap on school district reserves based on the contention that a state rainy day fund will reduce the need for local reserves. The percentage of a district's budget allowed in the local reserve fund will be determined by the size of the school district. The bill authorizing this change, SB 858, was passed as part of the current budget and signed into law by the Governor. CAPTA had no position on this measure.

Our Advocacy Program

Advocating for our children, families and public schools is a vital part of Fourth District PTA's program. Our goal is to create a network of council and unit advocacy chairs to help inform our members about important issues and empower them to speak out on behalf of children and youth.

The Fourth District PTA Advocacy Committee (the "A-Team") provides programs, resources and activities to meet this goal. These include:

- **Four Advocacy Roundtables**, featuring expert speakers on a variety of topics. Open to all PTA members.
- **Sacramento Safari**, March 16-17, takes about 90 PTA members to Sacramento to learn about the issues and visit legislators' offices.
- The *Advocacy Communicator*, for advocacy chairs to use and share. Published monthly, September through June, and available at www.fourthdistrictpta.org.
- **Talking Points** with a brief summary of current information accompany each issue of the *Advocacy Communicator*. Advocacy chairs can use these to make oral reports to their units or councils.
- **Speaker's Bureau**, A-Team members come to your meeting to talk about a variety of advocacy issues.
- **LegLinks**, emails are sent to inform members about legislative activities and alert them when action is needed. Sign up at www.fourthdistrictpta.org.
- **Advocacy Resource Notebooks** with information and resources for local advocates. May be purchased for \$10 at the Fourth District PTA office.
- **Council Legislative/Advocacy Chair Meetings** to discuss our advocacy programs, get feedback, and support local efforts.

For more information, contact Shereen Walter, Fourth District PTA Vice President for Advocacy, at advocacy@fourthdistrictpta.org.

Plan Your Advocacy Year

Advocacy Roundtables

September 26	9:30 a.m.—11:45 a.m.
November 14	9:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.
January 23	9:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.
April 24	9:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.

Sacramento Safari

Orientation, March 6	9:30 a.m.—11 a.m.
Trip, March 16 and 17	

More information about these events will be available in the *Advocacy Communicator*, *Orange Leaves*, Leg-Link and on www.fourthdistrictpta.org.