

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

OCTOBER 2014

The future of the California high school exit exam is in question

As California transitions to a new testing system aligned with the Common Core State Standards, the future of the high school exit exam remains in question.

In 2013 state lawmakers passed AB 484, which suspended most of the testing requirements for California students. The California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), however, was not included and students continue to take it.

The exit exam, created in 1999, requires students to prove basic proficiency in math and English before they receive a high school diploma.

State education leaders are starting to discuss whether the exit exam should be required or not, and whether it should be revamped to meet Common Core Standards.

Learn about education at Ed100.org

An effective advocate needs to understand how the California education system works. Becoming well-informed can be a challenge, especially with the recent changes in curriculum and school finance.

Now you can easily learn everything you need to know through Ed100, a free online instructional course for parents who want to help improve their local schools.

Ed100 presents comprehensive information in 10 chapters, each divided into 10 brief lessons. Subjects include teaching, facilities, curriculum, school finance and testing. You can go through the lessons in order or pick the topics that are of interest to you. On-line interactive discussion boards provide opportunities to exchange ideas with other parents. The website is available in both English and Spanish.

PTAs can use Ed100 to help inform members and discuss critical education issues. The website also provides an Local Control and Accountability Plan Parent Checklist (look under the “About” tab) to help you participate in the planning process for your school district.

Ed100 is supported by a number of foundations. The primary author is Jeff Camp, a former Microsoft Corp. manager and chair of Education Circle. Longtime California State PTA leaders Mary Perry and Carol Kocivar contributed to the development of the project.

The website is available at www.Ed100.org.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson has recommended several alternatives, including:

- Eliminating CAHSEE and using results of the new Smarter Balanced assessments to determine readiness for high school graduation.
- Using state tests along with voluntary exams such as the SAT or Advanced Placement tests instead of exit exams.
- Using the “successful completion” of specific courses to determine that students have met graduation requirements.

AB 484 requires the State Board of Education to present a comprehensive testing plan to the Legislature by 2016. Any changes in the testing program, including CAHSEE, will require new legislation.

Advocacy Roundtable

A bipartisan look at California's public education policy

Senator Bob Huff

29th District, California Senate Republican Leader
and

Rick Simpson

Deputy Chief of Staff to Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins

Special Introduction by **Kathy Moffat**
California State PTA Director of Legislation

Friday, November 14
9:30 a.m. to 12 noon

Fountain Valley School District, Board Room
10055 Slater Avenue, 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

How to be an informed voter

The General Election is coming up on November 4. Now is the time to educate yourself on the candidates and issues, so you make the best possible choice as you vote. Read the candidate statements in the voter's pamphlet produced by the Registrar of Voters. Contact local candidates by phone or email and ask them about the issues that are important to you.

Here are some websites to help you be an informed voter:

- **www.EasyVoterGuide.org**
A nonpartisan guide that includes information on candidates, ballot measures, how to vote, important dates and useful resources, produced by League of Women Voters of California and the California State Library.
- **www.SmartVoter.org**
Nonpartisan information on elections and voting, with information about all state and local races and ballot measures. Produced by the League of Women Voters.
- **www.FactCheck.org**
A nonpartisan, nonprofit website that monitors the factual accuracy of what is said by major U.S. political players. Produced by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania.
- **www.Maplight.org**
A nonpartisan organization that provides information about money's influence on politics.
- **www.ballotpedia.org**
A collaborative encyclopedia about state politics, including elections, congress, state executive officials, state legislatures, recall elections, and ballot measures. Ballotpedia is a "wiki," which means anyone can add or change information, so caution is required.

Important Dates for the Nov. 4 Election

October 6 through 28

Applications for vote-by-mail ballots available from the Registrar of Voters.

October 28

Last day to deliver a vote-by-mail application to the Registrar of Voters.

October 20

Last day to register to vote in the General Election. Voter registration form must be postmarked or delivered to the Registrar by this date.

PTA encourages voter registration

Encouraging people to register and vote is an appropriate activity for your PTA.

- National PTA is a partner with Nonprofit Vote, which has extensive resources to help encourage voter registration at www.nonprofitvote.org.
- Information and voter registration forms are available at the Orange County Registrar of Voters, 1300 S. Grand Ave., Building C, Santa Ana. Information and online voter registration can be found at www.ocvote.com.
- The California Secretary of State has a detailed Guide to Voter Registration Drives at www.sos.ca.gov under Elections/Publications and Resources.



Get ready to go!

Fourth District PTA Sacramento Safari March 16 and 17, 2015

Hear from a variety of experts in public education policy and state government. Then participate in small group visits to the offices of our local legislators in the Capitol. It's an exciting way to become more informed and to make your voice heard.

The cost is about \$600 per person, including hotel stay and travel expenses. This is a legitimate PTA expense.

For more information, go to www.fourthdistrictpta.org under Advocacy.

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. 1520 Brookhollow Drive, #40, Santa Ana, CA 92705 (714) 241-0495 www.fourthdistrictpta.org