

Talking Points for Legislative Chairs, April 2015

Details are in the April issue of the *Advocacy Communicator*.

- The news from Sacramento Safari is that a lot of change is happening in the state Capitol. Changes are being made in the way schools are funded, what they teach, how students are tested and how schools are held accountable for student achievement. The California State Board of Education and Department of Education are busy working out the details of these new programs.
- There has also been a shift away from efforts to improve schools and school districts through rewards and punishments. Instead, there are new programs to help schools be successful by offering them advice and support. There are also efforts to keep students in school by providing assistance during the crucial years of Kindergarten through third grade and by making schools attractive and supportive to both students and teachers.
- A complete report on all of the Sacramento Safari speakers is posted on the Fourth District PTA website, www.fourthdistrictpta.org under Advocacy.
- The next Advocacy Roundtable on April 24 will be about the new standardized tests. Our kids are learning new standards and taking new kinds of tests on computers. Staff from the Orange County Department of Education will be at the Roundtable to explain what it all means.
- California State PTA supports a state bill that would require all students who are medically eligible to be vaccinated for measles and other diseases. This is a pretty controversial issue. The *Communicator* has an article explaining why PTA took this position.
- California State PTA has also taken support positions on a number of bills dealing with new teacher preparation, charter schools, the high school exit exam and the cap on school district reserves.
- For years every school in California was rated with an API number, which was based primarily on standardized tests. (API stands for Academic Performance Index.) That process was suspended in 2013 when the state decided to develop a new evaluation system using several other measures such as graduation rates, school climate and college and career readiness programs. The State Board of Education has just decided to suspend the API for another year. The new system probably won't be in place until the fall of 2016.
- The State Board is getting recommendations on the new rating system from the Public Schools Accountability Act Advisory Committee. One of the members of this committee is Celia Jaffe, who is a member of the Fourth District PTA Advocacy Team and the State PTA Education Commission.

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