

# Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

DECEMBER 2017

## Ron Bennett predicts an interesting year for California education

Changes may be in store for California education as Gov. Brown spends his last year in office, according to Ron Bennett, our guest speaker at the November Advocacy Forum. Bennett is the CEO for School Services of California, a business, financial, management, and advocacy resource for educational agencies in California.

The following were among the topics discussed by Bennett:

**Local Control:** When Gov. Brown came into office, one third of the money school districts received from the state came through 42 categorical funds. This money could be spent only for specific purposes, regardless of local needs. Gov. Brown pushed through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), which eliminated most categoricals and allowed school districts to decide how to spend state funding. Some state legislators and interest groups would like to reinstate categorical programs. Bennett said it will be interesting to see if the next governor maintains support for LCFF or allows more categorical funds. "We should think about unintended consequences before going down that road again," he said.

**Teacher unions:** Last year, following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia, the Supreme Court tied 4-4 on the question of whether a union can require non-member teachers to pay agency fees to help pay for bargaining costs. Similar cases are now headed to the Supreme Court. With the appointment of a new justice it is likely that the decision will go against the unions, Bennett said. In states that have eliminated agency fees, teacher unions have lost membership and 40 to 50 percent of their revenues, as well as some of their political clout, he said.

**Teacher pay:** Salary levels of California teachers are in the top three nationwide, Bennett said. However, class sizes here are 50 percent larger than the national average, and our schools have the lowest number of administrators, counselors, librarians and other support staff. Teach-

ers are constantly bashed for "all the ills in society" and yet they get good to great results even with inadequate funding, he said.

**State Retirement System:** Because there is a shortfall in the state retirement fund for school employees, school districts are required to make higher payments into the system each year. These increasing payments are using up a quarter of the new funding that districts receive from the state. This means \$4.5 billion that should have gone to restore education programs is going to the pension funds, said Bennett.

**State Budget:** As Gov. Brown prepares his last proposed state budget, he will probably be fiscally conservative and underestimate the tax revenues the state will receive. Bennett predicts that the rising stock market will lead to higher capital gains taxes, resulting in a \$25 billion windfall for the state. How will that money be spent? State legislators could decide to pay off the infrastructure debt or stabilize the state retirement program, but Bennett doubts they will do that. Parents should be actively involved in deciding what to do with this money, he said.

## PTA Advocacy Conference Call

The next PTA Advocacy Conference call is scheduled for Monday, January 8, 2018, at 7 p.m. (Please note change from previous announcement.)

### Call-in Directions:

- Conference Dial-In Number: 1 (712) 775-7300
- Participant Access Code: 960878#
- To mute or unmute during the session, press \*6.

## Departing soon!

### Sacramento Safari

February 26 and 27, 2018



Registration fees go up  
after December 16!



Register now at  
[www.fourthdistrictpta.org](http://www.fourthdistrictpta.org)

Safari Orientation Meeting  
Friday, February 2  
9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.  
Fountain Valley School District  
10055 Slater Avenue, Fountain Valley

### Questions?

Contact Suzanne Gauntlett at  
[Sac-safari@fourthdistrictpta.org](mailto:Sac-safari@fourthdistrictpta.org)

## The basics of California school finance

### Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)

The Local Control Funding Formula, California's simplified system for funding public education, was put into place in 2013. LCFF 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 develop a plan describing how they will use the money.

- Every district receives a **base grant** for each student, with differing amounts for the grade levels of the students.
- Districts receive **supplemental grants** for each student who is an English learner, low-income or a foster child.
- Each district with more than 55 percent of students in those at-risk categories receives an additional **concentration grant**.

### Advocate for school funding now!

California's state budget process begins in January with an initial proposal from Gov. Brown. Legislators will start to discuss this and develop their priorities.

Now is the time to let them know that schools should be at the top of their list. Visit your state senator and assembly member in their home offices, send an email, or make a phone call. Remember to give your name and address when you contact your legislator.

Not sure who your legislator is? Go to:  
<http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov>

### California State PTA President to speak at next Advocacy Forum

**Friday, January 12**  
**9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
**Fountain Valley School District**  
**10055 Slater Ave., Fountain Valley**



California State PTA President Dianna MacDonald will be the guest speaker at our next Advocacy Forum. She will be joined by Lynn Miyamoto, CAPTA vice president for family engagement.

Dianna and Lynn will talk about how to advocate for a healthier school climate to improve the emotional and mental well-being of our children.

This event is free and open to all PTA members.

### Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)

Every school district must develop a Local Control and Accountability Plan describing how their funding will be spent. The plan must show how the district will meet eight priorities set up by the state and must demonstrate that the additional funds for high needs students will benefit those students. Districts must provide opportunities for input from school staff, unions, parents and students as they develop their plans. Each district's LCAP is submitted to the county office of education for approval.

### Proposition 98

In 1988, California voters passed Prop. 98, which was intended to ensure that a "minimum guarantee" of each year's state budget would be spent on public schools. Due to the passage of Prop. 111 in 1990 and legislative action, the funding formulas for Prop. 98 have become very complex. Although the original measure was supposed to designate 40 percent of each budget to education, this has happened only once in the past 25 years as the legislature found ways to suspend Prop. 98, shift revenues or make other adjustments.

### Gann Limit

In 1979, California voters approved Prop. 4, authored by Paul Gann, which limits the amount of tax money that state and local governments, including school districts, can spend. Some of the restrictions were softened by the passage of Prop. 111 in 1990.

### Basic Aid District

After voter approval of Prop. 13 in 1978, most school districts were unable to support themselves with local property tax funds so the state began to provide funding. A few school districts collect enough property tax to exceed the Gann revenue limit (see above). Until the 2002-03 fiscal year, these districts received \$120 per student in "basic aid" from the state, to fulfill the state's constitutional requirement to support public education. After this, the legislators decided that the categorical funding districts receive fulfills the state's obligation. Basic aid districts may keep the additional property tax they receive, but they must also develop annual LCAPs.

### California State PTA 2018 Legislation Conference

January 22 – 23, 2018  
 Sheraton Grand Hotel in Sacramento

Information and registration at [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org).