

# Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

OCTOBER 2019

## Advocate to include arts education in your district's LCAP

In California, arts education is a local responsibility. There is no significant state or federal program or piggy-bank to make it happen. It's up to each school board to determine how to prioritize the arts and how to budget for the necessary staff, space and equipment.

Too many school boards have cut back on existing arts education programs because of competing priorities. The California Arts Education Data Project concludes that statewide only 39 percent of students participate in the arts. Students in low-income communities are half as likely to receive arts education as those in more affluent communities.

The situation is better in Orange County, where 97 percent of students have access to some arts education. However, only 29 percent participate in all four arts disciplines required by state policy – music, visual art, theater and dance. (To find out how your district is doing, go to <http://www.createca.dreamhosters.com/interactive-dashboard/>)

Student involvement in the arts is linked to higher academic performance, increased standardized test scores, greater involvement in community service and lower dropout rates. The arts also foster critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration and innovation. They give students the skills they need to function successfully in the workforce.

Your PTA can play a key role in ensuring that students in your schools have access to a comprehensive arts program. How? Get involved in your school district's LCAP process.

The LCAP – or Local Control and Accountability Plan – describes how your school district will use its revenues to support the success of all students. Developing the plan is an annual process that is mandated by the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), California's system of school finance. LCFF requires local school boards to address goals that include student engagement, parental involvement, school climate, student achievement and pupil outcomes. The arts speak directly to those outcomes.

Right now is a great time for your PTA to start looking at your school district's plan. Find out what is in the

current LCAP and learn about your district's process for reviewing and revising the plan. Is the district making progress towards its goals? Are the arts available to every child? Is there a plan for meaningful, effective parent engagement?

In addition to the arts, there may be other areas where the plan could be improved. Now is the time to do the research and begin building a consensus.

For more information and advice on how to proceed, go to [capta.org](http://capta.org) and click on Resources. Parent involvement in the LCAP process is required by the state, so your school district should welcome your input.

**NOTE:** This article was adapted from a blog at [Ed100.org](http://Ed100.org) by Adelaide Kuehn. The blog includes examples of other California school districts that have expanded their arts programs.

Like it or not, you, as an involved parent or community member, are the heart of California's education accountability system. There is no independent watchdog in the system. You are it. The system literally depends on the vigilant support of local, active, informed constituents to speak up for what's right and what's needed.

EdWeek.org, Lesson 1.1

includes examples of other California school districts that have expanded their arts programs.

## PTA Advocacy Conference Calls

You can get up-to-date information from our California State PTA Director of Legislation Shereen Walter and members of the Legislation Team by participating in conference calls on the first Wednesday of the month. Calls are scheduled at 7 p.m. on the following dates:

October 2, 2019  
November 6, 2019  
December 4, 2019  
February 5, 2020  
March 4, 2020  
April 1, 2020  
May 6, 2020

### Call-in Directions:

- Conference Dial-In Number: 1 (605) 313-4821
- Participant Access Code: 604265#
- To mute or unmute during the session, press \*6.

If you encounter any phone issues like dropped calls or long periods of silence, please hang up and dial (805) 360-1075. This reroutes you to a different port in their system so you can enter the dial-in number directly.

## Now is a good time to visit your local lawmaker's office

With the state legislature on recess until January, this is the perfect time to visit your state lawmakers in their local offices. Here are some tips before you go.

- **Determine the reason for your visit.** A small group of members from your PTA may want to introduce yourselves and talk about the relevance of PTA. If you have a specific issue, make sure it is something the legislator can address, rather than something that should be dealt with at the school district level.
- **Call for an appointment.** Specify how much time you will need and the reason for your visit.
- **Research the legislator.** Find out what bills he or she proposed or supported. Look for common ground.
- **Draft an agenda for your group** that includes an opening, introductions and an order of PTA issues to be discussed. Assign a role to each person, including leader and note taker.
- **Be respectful.** Dress in a business-like manner. Arrive on time. Listen to what the legislator says. Leave after your appointed time, unless the legislator continues the conversation. Build a positive relationship.

- **Present PTA positions.** Research those ahead of time. If you're not sure about an issue that comes up in the conversation, tell the legislator you will get back with the information. Personal positions should be communicated at another time.

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

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## Join 4th District in Sacramento!

Join us on Sacramento Safari, the most exciting, interesting advocacy event of the year. You will hear the latest inside information from experts in public education policy. You will also visit your local legislators at our beautiful State Capitol in small groups led by experienced PTA leaders.

This is a wonderful opportunity to learn how state education policy is made, meet the decision-makers, and network with other Orange County parents.

If you have any questions, please e-mail Suzanne Gauntlett at [Sac-safari@fourthdistrictpta.org](mailto:Sac-safari@fourthdistrictpta.org).

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## New rules for charter schools

AB 1505, which changes the rules governing charter schools, was approved by the state legislature and sent to Gov. Newsom, who is expected to sign it. The bill was supported by California State PTA.

The main provisions of the bill are as follows:

- In considering an application for a new or expanded charter school, school districts are allowed to consider the financial and academic impact on the district or neighborhood.
- A charter school application that is denied at the school district level may be appealed to the county department of education, but can only be referred to the State Board of Education under certain circumstances.
- Renewal of a charter school (generally every five years) will depend on the school's performance, using the same criteria as other public schools.
- Teachers at a charter school must have the appropriate credentials for the classes they are teaching.

CAPTA believes charter schools have a valid place in our public school system as long as they are not run by for-profit organizations and do not reduce resources for other public schools. They should be fiscally and academically accountable and involve parents in decision-making. (The complete statement is at [capta.org](http://capta.org) under Focus Areas/Advocacy/Position Statements.)

## What you need to know about Sacramento Safari

Begins: Monday, February 24, at 10 a.m.  
 Ends: Tuesday, February 25, at 5 p.m.

### Basic policies:

- Attendees must be current PTA members.
- Attendees from units/councils must be voted as representatives.
- Attendees must be adults or high school students accompanied by an adult.
- School board members and superintendents welcome.

Total budget: About \$700 per person

### Fourth District PTA registration fees through December 16:

\$345 per person, double occupancy  
 \$460 per person, single occupancy

### Registration fees after December 16:

\$375 per person, double occupancy  
 \$499 per person, single occupancy

Fees include lunch and dinner on day 1 and breakfast on day 2

### You must make your own flight arrangements.

Flight options:  
 Through John Wayne Airport (SNA)  
 Southwest #1384, dep. 7:15 a.m., arr. Sacramento 8:50 a.m.  
 Southwest #345, dep. Sacramento 8:20 p.m., arr. 9:35 p.m.

Through Long Beach Airport (LGB)  
 Southwest #2035, dep. 7:05 a.m., arr. Sacramento 8:30 a.m.  
 Southwest #1411, dep. Sacramento 7:30 p.m., arr. 8:55 p.m.