

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

OCTOBER 2016

Parents now have a voice in school spending decisions

Parents and families have a central role in determining how school districts spend their funding, said Dr. Jeff Hittenberger, Chief Academic Officer for the Orange County Department of Education, at the Fourth District PTA Advocacy Training in September.

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) has been in place for three years, along with the requirement for each school district to create a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), describing how the state funding will be used to improve school programs. Parents should be an essential part of that process.

However, most parents don't know that there is a new funding system and that they can play a part in determining how school funds are used. Two recent polls found that only 16 to 30 percent of parents are familiar with LCFF and only five percent have participated in meetings to develop an LCAP.

Since one of the primary goals of the LCAP is increased parent participation, this creates a perfect opportunity for PTA advocacy to help usher in a new era of family engagement in our schools.

The LCAP process should involve a continuing cycle of engaging staff, parents, community members and other stakeholders, setting goals, determining strategies, actions and funding to meet those goals, and measuring the results, Hittenberger said.

Districts should share data on how strategies in the current plan are working. "If it's not working, try something else, or try it again in a different way," he said.

Above all, he emphasized that the LCAP should focus on meeting the needs of students—what he called "the heart of the LCAP."

The state's LCFF process is still changing as well, he added. The state Board of Education is expected to adopt a new LCAP template in November.

California State PTA has information on both LCFF and LCAP, with detailed descriptions on how parents can be involved, at www.capta.org.

(See page 2 for another report from the Advocacy Training.)



Dr. Jeff Hittenberger

Voter registration for seniors

Congratulations to all of the Orange County PTAs that worked to register high school seniors to vote during the 2015-16 school year!

Voter registrations for Orange County's 18-year-olds nearly DOUBLED from the previous June election, and are up 41 percent from the last Presidential Primary.

It's not too late to hold a voter registration drive at your high school.

Many of our high school students turn 18 before they graduate. Your PTA can encourage them to become active citizens by providing them with voter registration information and materials. Work with your administrators to get a voter registration form to every student.

A useful publication is "When You Turn 18: A Survival Guide for Teenagers," produced by the California State Bar. This booklet provides information about voting as well as laws related to banking, contracts, employment and other issues. Free copies are available at www.calbar.ca.gov/Public/Pamphlets.aspx

Keep in mind that in California 17-year-olds who will be 18 by the November election can also register to vote. Encourage adults at your school community to register as well.

Sacramento Safari! February 27 and 28, 2017

Too great to miss!

Get complete information
and register today at:

www.fourthdistrictpta.org



- ★ Hear about education issues from key state leaders who are involved in the decision-making process.
- ★ Visit our beautiful State Capitol.
- ★ Meet legislators and their staff and talk to them about our children and schools.
- ★ Network with parent advocates from throughout Orange County

Brown Act governs meetings of public officials



Ron Wenkart

As PTA advocates, many of us attend school board, city council, or other local meetings to monitor decisions and express our positions. It's important to know that these meetings are governed by California's Brown Act.

Ron Wenkart, OCDE General Counsel, gave an overview of this law, and how it affects the decision-making process of elected

officials, at the Advocacy Training in September.

The Brown Act was authored by California Assemblyman Ralph M. Brown in 1953, at a time when some local government bodies were holding secret meetings outside their jurisdictions. The law requires that all meetings and deliberations by local governing boards, including discussion, debate and acquisition of information, are conducted in public and subject to public scrutiny. There are exceptions for certain items of business, such as real estate negotiations or personnel matters.

The act defines a meeting as a congregation of a majority of the members of a legislative body at the same time and location, or by teleconference. (A majority of members may attend a social or ceremonial event, but they should sit separate from each other to avoid improper business discussion.)

Regular meetings must be set at a specific time and place within the jurisdiction of the governing body, and agendas must be posted at least 72 hours before each meeting. Topics that are not on the agenda may not be discussed by the board during the meeting. This is why board members generally do not respond to speakers during the public comment segment of their meeting.

Outside of a meeting, a majority of members may not use a series of communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, to discuss, deliberate or take action on any item of official business. This means, for instance, that a school board member may only discuss an item with one other board member, and may not com-

municate the comments or positions of another board member. If you discuss an item with one board member, he or she may not ask you to talk to another board member on that topic.

E-mail conversations involving a majority of board members are not allowed. If you send an email to all of the members of a board, each member should only respond to you, rather than responding to all.

At meetings, votes taken by secret ballot are prohibited. Members of the public are allowed to record board meetings.

Closed sessions may be held for the following topics:

- To negotiate the sale or purchase of real property.
- To discuss or initiate litigation.
- To appoint, employ, evaluate, discipline or dismiss an employee, or hear complaints or charges against an employee.
- To confer with a labor negotiator.

The board must disclose the topic to be discussed before going into closed session and must report any action taken, along with the votes of the members.

These rules apply only to elected officials, not to committees or groups like PTA.

"The greatest promise of the new era of family engagement in our schools is that parents, educators and elected school board members will talk more often and work together even more. The results, when we do, will be amazing for children."

PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Summary Version

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Forum

Friday, October 28

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

Location to be determined



Guest Speaker:
Ron Bennett
CEO of School Services
of California

Don't miss the chance to hear from one of the foremost experts in California public education!

Open to all PTA members.

Last day to register to vote

October 24 is the last day to register to vote in General Election.

Mailed voter registration forms must be postmarked by this date. Voter registration forms also may be delivered to Orange County Registrar of Voters or the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The Advocacy Communicator is published by the Fourth District PTA Advocacy Team and is intended for distribution to local PTA units and councils. President: Bev Berryman. Vice President, Advocacy: Kathleen Fay. Communicator Editor: Gisela Meier 1520 Brookhollow Drive, #40, Santa Ana, CA 92705 (714) 241-0495 www.fourthdistrictpta.org