

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT ADVOCACY TEAM

SEPTEMBER 2009

Federal grants worth billions at stake

Special leg session on schools

In an attempt to make California eligible for federal "Race to the Top" grants, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger called for a special legislative session to push for statutory changes in education. Assembly Speaker Karen Bass created a Committee on Education, headed by Assemblywoman Julie Brownley, to spearhead those efforts. At stake is California's part of \$4.3 billion in federal stimulus funds for schools.

One of the key issues under review is the repeal of an existing law that prohibits linking teacher evaluations to student performance; without this change, California will not qualify for "Race to the Top" funds. The Governor has also called for lifting the cap on the number of charter schools, allowing alternative pay schedules for teachers in some jobs, and opening enrollment to allow students to attend any school in the state.

The special legislative session will conclude before the end of the year.

Accountability Progress Report shows student improvement

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell was pleased to announce the seventh consecutive year of progress towards the goal of California schools achieving a score of 800 on the annual Academic Performance Index (API), with 42% of schools reaching that target.

The 2009 API report showed that while the achievement gap between Latino/African American and white/Asian students has narrowed slightly, it remains significant.

Progress declines at higher levels: While 48% of elementary schools have reached 800, only 36% of middle schools have done so, and the rate drops to 21% for high schools.

Results are based on statewide assessment results from the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program and from the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). *For the full report, go to www.fourthdistrictpta.org.*

Calendar of Events

Advocacy Roundtables:

Fridays, 9:30-11:00 a.m., OCDE, Bldg. D

- January 22
- April 16
- May 28

Sacramento Safari:

- Monday, 3/22 – Tuesday, 3/23
- Orientation: Friday, February 26

State PTA Legislation Conference:

February 21-22, Sacramento

EdSource Forum:

Friday, 3/19, 9am-3pm, Santa Clara Marriott

Election Days:

- November 3
- June 8 – Primary

Ask the Advocacy Team

If you have questions concerning advocacy issues, please contact us: advocacy@fourthdistrictpta.org

Key PTA Links

www.fourthdistrictpta.org – Click on **Advocacy**
www.capta.org – Select from menu: **Programs and Services: Advocacy and Children's Issues: Legislation**

www.pta.org – Click on **Take Action**

Statewide survey results

A statewide survey by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) shows that while Californians favor a switch to open election primaries, they don't like the idea of a part-time legislature.

Californians also feel that Prop 13 has mainly been good for the state, but would approve a change to taxing commercial property at current value.