

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT ADVOCACY TEAM

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2009

Legislature to continue working to acquire “Race to the Top” funds

The California State Assembly returned to work in December to vote on legislation intended to improve California’s chances of winning \$350-\$700 million in “Race to the Top” federal stimulus funds – a competitive grant program to provide over \$4.3 billion to states with plans to enact education reform.

The Senate approved its own version of “Race to the Top” legislation in early November, before final application guidelines were released. The new Assembly legislation is expected to take the final rules into account, including emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math, as well as greater flexibility for turning around low-performing schools, which were not addressed in the Senate bill.

Some education experts, however, are still urging caution when considering the creation of new laws that bring about permanent changes – and funding requirements – for the hope of winning one-time grant money.

LAO forecasts more budget woes

California Legislative Analyst Mac Taylor announced that LAO forecasts show that the state must address a General Fund budget problem of \$20.7 billion between now and the time the legislature enacts a 2010-11 state budget plan. Resolving this large shortfall will require painful choices on top of the difficult choices already made by the legislature this year.

The LAO stated that there is no way that California can avoid reprioritizing its finances; the legislature needs to begin making steady progress towards developing a sustainable budget framework if it is to restore the state’s fiscal health and enhance public trust in state government.

Revised estimates for Proposition 98 minimum guarantees project an increase for 2009-10, a decline the following two years, then a funding return to pre-recession levels by 2013-14:

Proposition 98 Forecast (<i>dollars in millions</i>)			
2009-10:	\$51,383	2012-13:	\$53,060
2010-11:	\$51,049	2013-14:	\$56,502
2011-12:	\$49,057	2014-15:	\$59,670

Calendar of Events

Advocacy Roundtables:

Fridays, 9:30-11:00 a.m., OC Dept. of Ed., Bldg. D

- January 22
- April 16
- May 28

Special Education:

Making Connections Conference, February 6

State PTA Legislation Conference:

February 21-22, Sacramento

EdSource Forum:

Friday, March 19, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Santa Clara Marriott

Sacramento Safari:

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

Got a voice?

Got children?

SPEAK OUT!

Sacramento Safari

March 22-23, 2010

Now More Than Ever

Register online at www.fourthdistrictpta.org

Learn about education policy and the workings of our state government. Meet with CAPTA legislative advocates. Hear from policy makers and elected representatives. Sign up today!

Save the date! January 22, 2010

ADVOCACY ROUNDTABLE

OC Department of Education

200 Kalmus Drive, Bldg. D, CM

9:30 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Special Guest Speaker:

Lisa Kalustian

From the Office of

Governor Schwarzenegger

Special Ed: Save the date! (Feb. 6)

A “Making Connections” conference is slated for February 6, from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., with further details to be announced. Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to come learn about topics that interest them and benefit their child, including *Behavior Management, Transition*, and much more. The conference is presented by the Capistrano Unified Council of PTSAs Special Education Linking Families (SELF), along with the Community Advisory Committee (CAC).

Constitutional convention efforts to reform governance move forward

The Bay Area Council’s *Repair California* turned in ballot language to call the first California convention in more than 130 years. The measures would call a limited convention to reform four areas of the constitution:

- the budget process;
- the election and initiative process;
- the balance of power between the state and local governments;
- the effectiveness of government, and creation of systems to improve it.

The proposed convention would not discuss tax increases or social issues (such as marriage, abortion, immigration or the death penalty.)

In the November 2010 election, voters will decide whether or not a constitutional convention will be held. The measure calls for a 2011 convention, with proposed reforms going before the voters in 2012.

Guest speakers candid on issues

On November 6, Rick Simpson, Deputy Chief of Staff to Assembly Speaker Karen Bass, was joined by California State Assemblywoman Diane Harkey (District 73) in an open discussion with PTA members and others in San Juan Capistrano concerning a variety of issues now facing Sacramento.

Finding a surprisingly large amount of common ground, both agreed that legislators want to “right the ship” for the state, but said such efforts will take time. They noted that while Californians are paying the legislature to act, voter initiatives are requiring actions that should be legislative decisions, while reducing flexibility to address budget problems. Moreover, efforts to change the architecture of the state’s constitution by laymen are a great source of dismay on both sides of the aisle.

Ask the Advocacy Team

If you have any questions concerning advocacy issues, please contact us at: 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**

California State PTA takes action on “Race to the Top” process

The California State PTA has been actively engaged in the “Race to the Top” (RTTT) process by:

- Providing verbal and written input at the Senate Committee on Education informational hearings.
- Submitting written comments on the proposed RTTT regulations to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.
- Speaking at Assembly Committee on Education Information hearings.
- Testifying as a panel member at the Assembly Committee on Education informational hearing on the “Data Systems to Support Instruction” piece of RTTT.
- Attending numerous meetings with our partners in the Education Coalition as well as with legislative leaders to discuss the RTTT program and California’s eligibility and competitiveness.
- Adopting a *support if amended* position on SBX5 1 (Romero, Wyland, Alquist & Huff) and a *support* position on SBX5 2(Simitian).

Here is a summary of the positions that CAPTA has taken on various aspects of “Race to the Top”:

- Support serious education reform efforts; focus must be on what is best for students to ensure they receive the education they need to compete in the global economy.
- Adoption of national standards and assessments must not lower our state standards, and must be developed with input from educators, parents and the community.
- Support a robust, longitudinal student achievement data system to improve classroom instructional practices, guide more effective resource allocations, and make student performance data more available and understandable to parents.
- Support parental choice within the public school system and the availability of public charter schools.
- Support efforts to turn around persistently low performing schools, improve student achievement and close the achievement gap. Parent/family engagement must be central to any school transformation.
- Student achievement data is one appropriate input in teacher evaluations, but no single test score should be the sole determinant of progress. We support multiple measures of assessment for teachers and administrators.