

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

NOVEMBER 2014

State efforts to expand early education meet with limited success

State lawmakers attempted to change the course of early education in California during the last legislative session, with limited success.

Senate President Pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg tried to create a state-wide transitional kindergarten (TK) program by introducing SB 837, which would have required all school districts that offer kindergarten to provide a year-long half-day TK program for four-year-old children. California State PTA supported this bill. However, Gov. Brown's proposed 2014-15 budget did not include funding for any early education programs. Steinberg revised his bill to offer TK only to low-income children.

In the end, lawmakers and the Governor agreed to a \$115 million increase in the state budget for the existing California State Preschool Program, which serves four-year-olds from low-income families. This will allow an additional 11,500 children to participate in the program in 2014-15.

Lawmakers also tried to make kindergarten attendance mandatory. Currently, children in California are not required to attend kindergarten, although most age-eligible children do. AB 1444, by Assembly Members Joan Buchanan and Shirley Weber, would have required children to complete a year of kindergarten before entering first grade. California State PTA supported this bill, citing the significant impact of early education on a child's self-esteem, social competence and readiness to achieve academically.

AB 1444 was passed by lawmakers but vetoed by Governor Brown.

"Most children already attend kindergarten, and those that don't may be enrolled in other educational or developmental programs that are deemed more appropriate for them by their families," the Governor wrote in his veto statement. "I would prefer to let parents determine what is best for their children, rather than mandate an entirely new grade level."

There was also an attempt to move toward mandatory full-day kindergarten throughout the state. Currently, school districts offer full-day or part-day kindergarten, and state law allows them to offer different lengths of time at various schools.

AB 1719, also by Buchanan and Weber, originally called for a feasibility study and implementation plan to

make all public school kindergarten programs full-day. CAPTA supported this bill, stating that a full-day kindergarten program would allow adequate time for learning as well as allowing time for physical activity and creative play, which helps develop the whole child.

AB 1719 was amended before being passed and signed into law. It now requires all school districts to provide the state Department of Education with annual reports on the type of kindergarten programs they offer. The state Superintendent of Public Education has until July 1, 2017, to provide the state legislature with an evaluation of part-day and full-day kindergarten programs as well as recommended best practices for providing a full-day kindergarten program. These provisions only go into effect if the legislature appropriates funding for these purposes.

Advocacy Roundtable

A bipartisan look at California's public education policy

Senator Bob Huff

29th District, California Senate Republican Leader
and

Rick Simpson

Deputy Chief of Staff to Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins

Special Introduction by **Kathy Moffat**
California State PTA Director of Legislation

Friday, November 14
9:30 a.m. to 12 noon

Fountain Valley School District, Board Room
10055 Slater Avenue, Fountain Valley, 92708
(Please park at the back of the building, not in the front.)

All PTA members are welcome to attend.

Questions? Please contact Fran Sdao at
roundtables@fourthdistrictpta.org

OCDE trustees hold first of two hearings on Common Core

The first of two public hearings on California's Common Core State Standards (CCSS) was held by the board of trustees of the Orange County Department of Education on October 20.

Four panelists spoke in favor of the standards, including Fourth District PTA immediate past president Celia Jaffe. Four panelists spoke against the standards.

The speakers in favor said that development of CCSS was prompted by the National Governor's Association. The standards were adopted by the California Department of Education and must be implemented in all California school districts. Local school boards are responsible for the selection of curriculum aligned with the standards. California State PTA strongly supports CCSS because students will learn critical-thinking and problem-solving skills that they need to be successful in a 21st century global economy.

Panelists in opposition to the CCSS called them propaganda by organizations with special interests and said the standards are being used to hide federal involvement in public education. They said the federal waiver allowing 34 states and nine California school districts to opt out of No Child Left Behind is unconstitutional and that the OCDE board should file a lawsuit against the federal government. Opponents called the CCSS testing an experiment given without informed parental consent where data mining would be rampant.

OCDE Trustee Ken Williams said the second hearing on CCSS would involve different panelists to provide more information. After this meeting a white paper will be published.

Second hearing on Common Core State Standards
Monday, November 17 — 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
OCDE Boardroom
200 Kalmus Drive, Costa Mesa.
PTA members are encouraged to attend.

PTA-supported bills signed into law

During the past legislative session, California State PTA took positions on 87 bills, of which 25 were passed and signed into law. Eight bills supported by PTA were passed but vetoed by the governor. Among the PTA-supported bills that were enacted are the following:

AB 1455 (Campos) Pupils: bullying: counseling services. Authorizes the superintendent of a school district, the principal, or the principal's designee to refer a victim of, witness to, or other pupil affected by an act of bullying to the school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, school nurse, or other school support service personnel for case management, counseling, and participation in a restorative justice program, as appropriate.

AB 2217 (Melendez) Pupil and personnel health: automated external defibrillators. Authorizes a public school to solicit and receive non-state funds to acquire and maintain an automated external defibrillator (AED). The bill also provides that the employees of the school district and the district itself are not liable for civil damages resulting from certain uses, attempted uses, or non-uses of an AED.

SB 1165 (Mitchell) Pupil instruction: sexual abuse and sex trafficking prevention education. Requires the Instructional Quality Commission, during the next revision of "Healthy Framework for California Public Schools," to consider, develop, and recommend for adoption by the state board, a distinct category on sexual abuse and sex trafficking prevention education.

SB 1174 (Lara) English language education. Places an initiative on the November 2016 ballot that would overturn specific elements of Proposition 227. Proposition 227 requires that all children in California be taught English by being taught in English.

Full reports on CAPTA advocacy can be found at www.capta.org.

Election Day - November 4

- ★ Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- ★ Encourage parents at your school to vote!
- ★ Vote-by-Mail ballots must be received (not post-marked) by the Registrar of Voters office or a polling place by 8 p.m. November 4.

Register now for Sacramento Safari!

Registration is open for Sacramento Safari, the most exciting event of the Fourth District PTA advocacy year!

This year's two-day visit to the state Capitol is scheduled for March 16 and 17.

If you plan to go, here is what you need to do:

- Ask your PTA unit or council to vote to elect you as a representative on the Safari.
- Book your flights now, while prices are lower.
- Register for Safari at www.fourthdistrictpta.org as soon as possible. Registration will close when we have 100 participants.

The Advocacy Communicator is published by the Fourth District PTA Advocacy Team and is intended for distribution to local PTA units and councils. Maureen Christensen—President; Shereen Walter—Vice President, Advocacy; Gisela Meier—Editor.
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