

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

MARCH 2018

Our two major messages to California legislators

Sixty-eight parents and one high school student participated in this year's Fourth District PTA Sacramento Safari. After listening to presentations by more than a dozen speakers on a variety of education topics, the participants split into small groups to visit legislator offices in the state capitol.

Our two major requests were as follows:

1. Amend the Local Control and Accountability Plan to include Family Engagement.

California's system of school funding – the Local Control Funding Formula, or LCFF – gives school districts flexibility in local spending decisions and requires each district to describe its spending plans in a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). The LCAP must focus on eight key areas that help all students succeed. One of those areas is Parental Involvement, but the concept is not well-defined in the current law.

California State PTA is sponsoring **AB 2878**, authored by Assemblyman Rocky Chávez. This would add **Family Engagement** to the LCAP law and would specify that Parental Involvement and Family Engagement include:

- Welcoming all families into school communities.
- Engaging in two-way communication with school administrators and families.
- Supporting student success.
- Empowering families to advocate for equity and access.
- Treating families as partners to inform, influence, and create practices and programs that support student success.
- Expanding pupil learning, enrich community ties, and promote civic engagement.

These are based on National and California State PTA-developed best practices to create the most authentic and meaningful engagement to support student suc-

PTA Advocacy Conference Call

The next California State PTA advocacy conference call is scheduled for Monday, March 26, at 7 p.m.

Call-in Directions:

- Conference Dial-In Number: 1 (712) 775-7300
- Participant Access Code: 960878#
- To mute or unmute during the session, press *6.

cess. The Harvard Family Project (2009) found that "schools would need to spend \$1,000 more per pupil to reap the same gains in student achievement that an involved and engaged parent brings."

2. Hold legislative hearings to explore ways to increase school funding.

California State PTA is asking for informational hearings to examine options towards creating a long-term spending plan that will raise the per-pupil spending equivalent to the top 10 highest achieving and funded states. Senator Anthony Portantino (25th District) has agreed to sponsor the hearings.

California ranks near the bottom nationwide in per-pupil funding. Our schools have the fewest administrators and other support staff and the largest class sizes in the country. California student achievement continues to fall below most other states in both math (45 states) and English & reading levels (39 states). (*NAEP, the Nation's Report Card, 2015*) States that invest more in education show higher student achievement levels than California. (*Education Week, Quality Counts 2017*)

According to the California School Boards Association, the top 10 student-achieving states in the nation provide, on average, \$7,500 more per pupil than California.

Reports on all of the speakers at Sacramento Safari will be posted at www.fourthdistrictpta.org soon.

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Forum

Friday, March 9

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

Fountain Valley School District
10055 Slater Ave., Fountain Valley

Focus on

Mental Health

Guest Speaker:

Lynne Pedersen



Lynne Pedersen is the founder and CEO of **One Recovery** (www.1recovery.com), an arts-infused mental health program for young people currently being used by the Newport-Mesa Unified School District.

Please join us and learn what we can do to support better mental health for all of our kids.

Open to all PTA members.

Study looks at the impact of increased school funding

Does increased school funding make a difference in the academic success of students?

The answer is yes, according to **Money and Freedom: The Impact of California's School Finance Reform**, a new study by researchers at UC Berkeley and the Learning Policy Institute.

The study looked at the impact of California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), which was adopted in 2013. Under LCFF, school districts receive additional funding for students who are English learners, in foster care or in low-income families. Districts decide how to spend their funding to meet local needs.

The study found "strong evidence that increases in school spending under LCFF have led to significant corresponding increases in high school graduation rates and academic achievement, particularly among students from low-income families."

High school students in schools that received more funds showed a significant increase in math test scores. The researchers found that every additional \$1,000 a dis-

trict received resulted in an increase of about seven months of learning.

Added funding also led to higher reading scores for all 11th grade students, regardless of income level.

Graduation rates increased by 5.3 percent on average among all students for every \$1,000 increase, with an increase of 6.1 percent in the number of low-income students who completed high school.

According to the researchers, districts that received extra funding for high-needs students increased their spending on special education and district-run preschool programs for four-year-olds. The districts also lowered class sizes, raised teacher salaries and purchased more instructional materials.

The researchers noted that the study only looks at the first three years of LCFF, but concluded "that money targeted to the needs of students, and allocated by local districts to meet those needs, can make a difference in student outcomes."

(Adapted from a report by Louis Freedberg at EdSource.org.)

CAPTA supports initiative to reform Proposition 13

California State PTA supports the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act of 2018, an initiative that would create a "split roll" property tax to increase taxes on commercial and industrial properties, resulting in more than \$11 billion in additional revenues for the state.

There would be no changes in Prop. 13 protections from homeowners and agricultural property.

Commercial and industrial properties would be assessed and taxed at fair market value. About half of the new revenues would go to K-12 schools and community colleges, with the remainder shared by counties, cities and special districts. All of these entities would be required to publicly disclose the amount of funding they receive as a result of this initiative and how it is spent.

Small business properties (with 50 or fewer employees) would not be reassessed until they are sold. Property tax on fixtures and equipment would be eliminated for small businesses.

Supporters of the proposal say that large corporations have not been paying their fair share of property taxes, depriving schools and community services of needed revenue.

Signature gathering to qualify the initiative for the November ballot is underway. The campaign is sponsored by a coalition that includes the League of Women Voters of California, PICO California, California Calls and the Advancement Project.

PTA takes action against gun violence

On March 14, students across the country are planning to "walk out" to demand an end to gun violence. California State PTA is asking for your help to "call out" our federal legislators and demand action.

Stand together with students and call your federal legislators on March 14 to demand stronger gun-violence prevention legislation including:

- Prohibiting the sale and possession of assault weapons including automatic and semi-automatic weapons.
- Mandatory background checks.
- Waiting periods for all firearm purchases.

Call through the CAPTA.org website or call your legislators on your own. You can call each senator's office in California or in Washington D.C. Give your message to the person who answers the phone. Phone calls from constituents are tabulated by staff.

California's two U.S. Senators are:

Dianne Feinstein: (310) 914-7300 or (202) 224-3841

Kamala Harris: (213) 894-5000 or (202) 224-3553

To find out who your Congressional representative is, go to www.house.gov.

For more information on CAPTA positions and protocols on student walk-outs, go to www.capta.org.

