

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

OCTOBER 2018

New education report finds progress, but more reform needed

California's K-12 education system is moving in the right direction, but more reforms are needed. That is the main determination of *Getting Down to Facts II* (GDTFII), an in-depth examination of our state's schools.

During the ten years since the first *Getting Down to Facts* report, California has adopted new academic standards, created new funding and accountability systems, raised taxes to support schools (Propositions 30 and 55), and directed more resources to the children most in need.

On the other hand, achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, income and English-learner status persist. California students lag behind the rest of the country in achievement by the time they enter Kindergarten. Funding for education is still far below what is needed to meet the state's goals, the report states.

The first *Getting Down to Facts* study of school governance and finance was commissioned by then Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, the state superintendent of education, legislative leaders and the Governor's Committee on Educational Excellence. This groundbreaking report, issued in 2007, showed that California schools were seriously underfunded. Although many of the recommendations were set aside in the wake of the economic recession, the report did lead to a weighted student funding formula, with more money directed to high-needs students.

GDTFII consists of 36 separate studies conducted by more than 100 academics from research institutions across California and the United States. The project was coordinated by Stanford University and Policy Analysis for California Education.

Among the findings:

- California students, with the exception of wealthy children, continue to lag a full grade behind the nation. This gap begins with Kindergarten students, indicating the need for more high-quality childcare and preschool.
- Funding for K-12 schools would have to increase by 32 percent, or \$22 billion, in order for students to be proficient on state standards and prepared for success after high school.
- California still has fewer teachers, administrators and counselors per student than most states.
- Principals and teachers with the least experience are assigned disproportionately to the lowest-achieving schools. Nearly three-quarters of school district report teacher openings they can't fill, especially in math, science and special education.

- California provides fewer mental health services in school than most states.
- Critical funding issues involving pensions, special education and facilities must be addressed before they destabilize the school system.

The full report can be found at gettingdown-tofacts.com. Summaries of the report are at EdSource.org.

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Forum

Friday, November 16

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

Fountain Valley School District
10055 Slater Ave., Fountain Valley



Focus on school funding: Follow the Money!

Join us as we explore key school funding issues at the state, county, and local school district levels.

Open to all PTA members.



Rick Simpson

Former Chief of Staff to the Speaker of the California Assembly and renowned school funding and policy expert



Dean West

Associate Superintendent for Business Services, Orange County Department of Education



Kathy Moffat

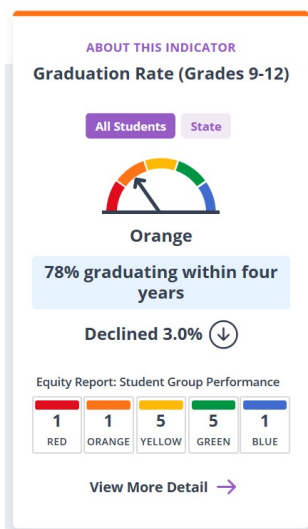
Orange Unified School Board Member and past Director of Legislation for California State PTA

California School Dashboard gets a makeover

The California School Dashboard is getting a new look.

The Dashboard has been the state's online school accountability system since March, 2017. It uses multiple criteria such as graduation rates, chronic absenteeism, and college and career readiness, along with academic achievement, to measure school success. It also indicates whether schools have improved or declined in each area.

Currently this information is presented through color-coded pie charts. However, parents and school groups have found these charts confusing and difficult to use. Gov. Jerry Brown hired a Washington D.C. de-



sign firm to come up with a different format.

The new Dashboard will use a gauge with an arrow in place of the pie chart. Users will be able to flip each performance measure 'card' to see details. They will also be able to compare overall school or district test scores with state averages. The website will be streamlined with fewer pages and is designed for mobile devices.

The revised design, scheduled for implementation in December, will help parents get the information they need to work on priorities for their school district Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP).

The new Dashboard will be available at www.cde.ca.gov.

Get ready to join us for Sacramento Safari!

Join us on Sacramento Safari, the most exciting, interesting advocacy event of the year. You will hear the latest inside information from experts in public education policy. Confirmed speakers for this year include Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, Assembly Education Committee Chairman Patrick O'Donnell, and Assembly Member Tom Daly.

You will also visit your local legislators at our beautiful State Capitol in small groups led by experienced PTA leaders.

This is a wonderful opportunity to learn how state education policy is made, to meet the decision-makers,

and network with other Orange County parents.

If you have any questions, please e-mail Suzanne Gauntlett at Sac-safari@fourthdistrictpta.org.

What you need to know about Sacramento Safari

Begins: Monday, February 25, at 10 a.m.
Ends: Tuesday, February 26, at 5 p.m.

Basic policies:

- Attendees must be current PTA members.
- Attendees from units/councils must be voted as representatives.
- Attendees must be adults or high school students accompanied by an adult.
- School board members and superintendents welcome.

Total budget: About \$650 per person

Fourth District PTA registration fees through December 15:

\$340 per person, double occupancy
\$455 per person, single occupancy

Registration fees after December 15:

\$370 per person, double occupancy
\$485 per person, single occupancy

Fees include lunch and dinner on day 1 and breakfast on day 2

You must make your own flight arrangements. Flight options:

Through John Wayne Airport (SNA)
Southwest #755, depart 7:15 a.m., arrive Sacramento 8:50 a.m.
Southwest #325, depart Sacramento 7:55 p.m., arrive 9:15 p.m.

Through Long Beach Airport (LGB)
Southwest #526, depart 7:10 a.m., arrive Sacramento 8:35 a.m.
Southwest #394, depart Sacramento 6:45 p.m., arrive 8:05 p.m.

How to promote voter registration

A wonderful activity for PTA units in this election season is a voter registration drive. This is a nonpartisan activity and it is fine to do on school district premises, with the necessary approvals.

You don't even need voter registration cards to do this. Simply let people know that they can go to the website of the Orange County Registrar of Voters (ocvote.com) or the California Secretary of State (sos.ca.gov) to register online. There is even a QR code that you can download and print from the Secretary's site that will take you directly to a voter registration page.

Remember that teens can pre-register to vote when they are 16 or 17 and many turn 18 in high school. For ideas and a complete program for registering students go to *High School Senior Voter Reg Guide* at www.fourthdistrictpta.org, under Advocacy.

