**Talking Points for Legislative Chairs, March 2019**

Details are in the March issue of the *Advocacy Communicator.*

* The March *Advocacy Communicator* has several reports from Sacramento Safari. Sixty-eight PTA members and one student heard from 15 speakers and then divided into small groups to visit legislator offices in the state capitol. They had four messages for the legislators:
  1. Our kids need mental health resources and support services now.
  2. PTA supports late school start time for middle school and high school.
  3. Arts education is not optional.
  4. California needs a stable, long-term funding system.
* Sherry Griffith, Executive Director of the California State PTA, talked to the Safari participants about art education, which is required by state education code. In effect, most of our schools are in violation of California law because they do not teach visual and performing arts (VAPA). The CAPTA website – capta.org – has a lot of resources for those of us who want to advocate for the arts, including a new interactive dashboard that shows the VAPA programs school districts and individual schools now offer.
* The future of charter schools was a hot topic for several speakers at Sacramento Safari. SB 126 was quickly approved by both the Assembly and the Senate and is expected to be signed by the Governor. It requires charter schools to follow the same laws about open meetings, public records and conflicts of interest that apply to school districts. Other bills restricting charter schools have also been introduced.
* About one in every five California teens ages 12 to 17 suffers from emotional or mental health issues. Early intervention can make a big difference. But most children do not get the help they need. The Communicator lists several resources we can use to advocate for more mental health services in our schools.
* The next Fourth District PTA Advocacy Forum is on March 29 at the Fountain Valley School District. Several of our Orange County legislators will be there to talk about upcoming issues. We should all attend!

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