

# Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

APRIL 2019

## California State PTA takes positions on proposed state legislation

With the state legislative session well underway, California State PTA advocates are busy studying proposed bills that impact children and schools and deciding which ones to oppose or support. CAPTA positions on bills are based on the mission and purposes of PTA, position statements, legislative planks, and the resolutions passed by members at the state convention.

Among the current bills supported by CAPTA are:

**AB 218 (Gonzalez)** This bill would extend the time limit for recovering damages due to a childhood sexual assault.

**AB 6 (Reyes)** This bill would establish the Early Childhood Education Branch within the state Department of Education to ensure a holistic implementation of early childhood education programs and universal preschool.

**AB 20 (Berman)** This bill would create the California Computer Science Coordinator in the State Department of

### Information on state legislative bills

Where can you go to find information about legislative bills supported by California State PTA?

Legislative news from Sacramento is available at [www.fourthdistrictpta.org](http://www.fourthdistrictpta.org) under Advocacy. Sign up to receive legislative updates through LegLinks.

For more information on the bills that CAPTA is following, go to [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org) under Focus Areas/Advocacy/Current Legislation.

You can also track state bills through the official state legislative website, [www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov). When you get to the page for a specific bill, click on the tab titled "Bill Analysis." This will often provide you with information from the bill's author, including a clear explanation of what the law would do, why it is needed, research or background to support the need for the law, and a list of supporters.

### CAPTA Advocacy Conference Call

The next California State PTA advocacy conference call is scheduled for Monday, April 22, at 7 p.m.

#### Call-in Directions:

- Conference Dial-In Number: 1 (641) 715-3276
- Participant Access Code: 604265#
- To mute or unmute during the session, press \*6.

Education to provide statewide coordination in implementing the computer science strategic implementation plan once it has been adopted by the state board and submitted to the Legislature.

**AB 197 (Weber)** This bill would require school districts that offer kindergarten and charter schools serving early primary grades to offer a full-day kindergarten program.

**SB 729 (Portantino)** This bill would require the amount of the Local Control Funding Formula base grant for the 2019–20 fiscal year to be increased by a 5.16 percent cost-of-living adjustment.

**SB 38 (Hill)** This bill would prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products. Usage of these products among youth has increased dramatically; 80 percent of young people who use tobacco start with a flavored product.

**SB 265 (Hertzberg)** A previously passed bill made it illegal to shame a child whose parents owed for school lunches, but some schools still maintain policies that discriminate against children because they don't have lunch money. SB 265 ensures that meal charge policies established by school officials do not delay or deny food, or provide an alternative meal to punish students.

**AB 39 (Muratsuchi)** This bill would increase the Local Control Funding Formula base grant as well as the supplemental and concentration grant amounts that school districts receive for the 2019-20 school year.

**AB 8 (Chu)** This bill would increase the number of school-site mental health professionals from the current ratio of 1,265 students per one professional to 400:1.

**SB328 (Portantino)** This bill would ensure that most middle and high schools would start their school days no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

**AB 493 (Gloria)** This bill would require schools to annually provide in-service training to teachers and other certificated employees of pupils in grades 7 to 12 on school-site and community resources for the support of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) pupils as well as strategies to increase support for LGBTQ pupils.

**AB 1085 (McCarty)** This bill would allow schools that offer after-school enrichment programs to offer youth development activities that promote healthy choices and behaviors in order to prevent and reduce substance use and improve school retention and performance.

## Fourth District PTA makes it easy to be an advocacy chair

The legislative or advocacy chair may seem like the most difficult job for a PTA to fill.

Everyone thinks it's a hard job. Everyone thinks you have to be an expert.

Think again.

Here in Fourth District PTA, we make the job as easy as possible. All it requires is a little effort and some computer skills.

It also helps to have a basic understanding that what goes on in Washington, D.C. and especially in Sacramento has a HUGE impact on all of our schools and that it behooves all of us to pay attention.

What should an advocacy chair expect to do? He or she should inform members about education-related activities in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. That's easy to do. Fourth District PTA produces the *Advocacy Communicator* newsletter every month, September through June, with the latest news. When the email announcement of publication arrives, the advocacy chair can make copies for members or simply forward the email. We even pro-

vide talking points that can be read as a brief oral report at a PTA meeting.

The advocacy chair should also notify members when an important piece of legislation is being considered so that members can take action as recommended by PTA. This is easy to do by signing up for legislative alerts through Fourth District PTA, California State PTA, and/or National PTA. Legislative action alerts can then be forwarded to the membership.

The Fourth District PTA Advocacy Team offers numerous opportunities for advocacy chairs, and all PTA members, to educate themselves. These include an information-packed *Advocacy Resource Notebook*, Advocacy Forums featuring well-informed education experts, and a speaker's bureau to provide information on a variety of advocacy topics at your unit or council meeting. And of course there is the ultimate advocacy experience: Sacramento Safari.

With that many resources, it should be easy to fill your unit or council advocacy position!



**Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife.**

John Dewey, 1859-1952



## Serve on the site council to learn more about your school

[This article is adapted from a blog by Leslie Reckler at [www.Ed100.org](http://www.Ed100.org).]

There are lots of ways to get involved in your school — PTA, classroom volunteer, booster clubs, and more. As an active participant in your school community, you learn a lot about how the school functions. You also find out how to make your voice heard in a meaningful way.

Your school site council offers a special opportunity to learn about student achievement, school policy, programs, budgets and the connection between an individual school and the school system. You also have an opportunity to participate in making important decisions for your school.

A major duty of the site council is to develop and annually update the School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), a formal plan for the school that satisfies both state and federal program requirements. The school site council must monitor the use of school district funds that are intended to benefit specific groups of students and to speak up if something needs to change.

The SPSA identifies a school's strengths and weaknesses in regard to student achievement, and documents the strategies to close the gaps. Working with the principal, the site council may recommend ways to allocate the school's spending budget to improve outcomes.

Once the SPSA is approved by the council, it is sent to the local school board for approval. School district superintendents are responsible for ensuring that each school's SPSA harmonizes with the school district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP).

The membership of a site council is determined by law. In 2019, the law was changed: the new minimum number of members is ten, down from twelve.

Classroom teachers must make up the majority of school personnel elected. In a ten-member site council at an elementary school, the members are typically: the principal, three teachers who work at the school, one other school employee, and five parents. Members are chosen by their peers — that is, teachers are chosen by other teachers, parents by other parents, and students by students.

In secondary schools, the site council *must* include student members (replacing some of the seats held by parents); in middle schools the law is silent, which suggests councils *may* include student members. In schools with fewer than 300 students the council can be smaller. Sometimes community members may take the place of a parent if chosen by parents.

Your voice and your school experiences are vitally important, and by serving on the site council you can help shape and improve your school.

*The Advocacy Communicator* is published by the Fourth District PTA Advocacy Team and is intended for distribution to local PTA units and councils. President: Erin Jenks. Vice President, Advocacy: Vivien Moreno. Communicator Editor: Gisela Meier  
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