

# Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

MAY 2021

## Why is PTA advocacy important? Let's count the ways.

The big decisions that affect your children aren't made just at your school, or even at your school district office. Many of those crucial decisions—especially regarding how much money schools receive—are made in Sacramento. That's one reason PTA advocacy is important.

School districts decide how to spend the money they get from Sacramento, which does have an impact on individual schools and the students they serve. It is essential for parents to be involved in those decisions. That's PTA advocacy in action.

Beyond caring for their own children and schools, PTA members realize that every child deserves a healthy upbringing and a good education. This can only be accomplished by "securing adequate laws for the care and protection of children," both at the state and the national level. PTA advocacy helps make that happen.

Learning about the ins and outs of lawmaking in California is a fascinating, fun, sometimes infuriating experience, and something all of us, as citizens of this great state, should care about.

Bottom line: every PTA member should be involved in advocacy!

Does your PTA unit or council have an advocacy program? Here are some things you can do to make it happen next year:

- **Make sure your PTA has an advocacy representative.** This can be an elected office or an appointed chair position.
- **Why stop at one person?** Advocacy should be on everyone's agenda. Put together a committee to work with your advocacy rep. PTA councils should consider forming a legislative action group with members from all of your units.
- **Learn about Fourth District PTA resources.** This newsletter, published September through June, provides news from Sacramento and information about Fourth District PTA advocacy events. Sign up at [fourthdistrictpta.org](http://fourthdistrictpta.org) to get notices when the newsletter is available. Each issue comes with Talking Points

that your advocacy rep can present at PTA meetings. Fourth District also offers free Advocacy Forums with knowledgeable education experts, an information-packed Advocacy Resource Notebook, a speakers bureau, and more!

- **Attend advocacy workshops at the California State PTA Convention.** (See article on page 2.)
- **Include advocacy in your PTA budget for next year.**
- **Plan to send at least one representative to Sacramento Safari.** We hope to return to the Capitol on March 7 and 8, 2022. Please budget about \$700 per person for the trip.

PTA has a proud history of advocating for programs and legislation that help children be safe, healthy, and successful. Be a part of that vital mission!

## Watch for the May revise of the California State budget

The next steps in the reopening of California schools in the fall, including possible mandates requiring schools to provide full-time in-person instruction, will come into play as Governor Gavin Newsom and the legislature work on the final version of the state budget.

In January, Newsom issued his first draft of the 2021-22 budget, which included \$4.6 billion in one-time funding to help school districts address the impacts of the pandemic. He also asked lawmakers to quickly approve \$2 billion to encourage school districts to reopen classrooms for pre-kindergarten through grade 6. That allocation was passed by the legislature and signed into law in March.

In May, the governor will issue his "May revise" budget based on updated tax revenue information. Negotiations with lawmakers will follow. Questions remain as to whether there will be a mandate to fully reopen schools or whether distance learning will still be allowed as an alternative.

In addition to state funding, California K-12 schools will receive \$15.3 billion through the federal American Rescue Plan, signed by President Biden in March. Newsom is asking districts to use that money to extend the school day and the school year.

Click [here](#) for an important article about PTA advocacy and school reopening by California State PTA Director of Legislation Shereen Walter.

**Sacramento Safari 2022!**

**Please note that the dates have been changed to:**

**March 7-8**

## Proposed legislation supported by California State PTA

California State PTA takes positions on proposed laws based on the purposes and values of PTA, and the legislative platform and policies and resolutions approved by members at state conventions.

“AB” measures are Assembly Bills introduced by one or more members of State Assembly, while “SB” bills are introduced in the Senate. Laws must be approved by both houses of the legislature and signed or approved by the governor to go into effect.

The following are bills that CAPTA is supporting:

[AB22](#) (McCarty) Expands access to full-day transitional kindergarten (TK) programs to all four-year-old children statewide at no cost to families.

[AB321](#) (Valladares) Ensures that children from homes in which the primary language is not English are eligible to enroll in state childcare services and preschools.

[AB367](#) (Garcia, Cristina) Requires public schools to stock their restrooms with free menstrual products.

[AB393](#) (Reyes) Requires the California Department of Social Services to conduct an evaluation of emergency services provided to childcare programs during the pandemic and prepare recommendations for ongoing and future emergency support services.

[AB656](#) (Carrillo) Establishes a pilot project to address racial disparities in the child welfare system when deciding whether a child should be removed from their parents’ home.

[AB967](#) (Frazier) Establishes a COVID-19 Special Education Fund to support school districts in resolving conflicts and providing services that address the impacts of the pandemic.

[AB988](#) (Bauer-Kahan) Creates a 24/7 emergency phone line, using 988 as the number, for suicidal individuals, funded by a charge on telephone lines.

[AB1117](#) (Wicks) Provides grants to develop local health, mental health, social and academic support services for children and families, and provides training for school staff to identify children suffering from mental health issues.

[AB1197](#) (Quirk-Silva) Revises the sodium and sugar requirements for a nutritionally adequate school meals at breakfast or lunch to be more stringent than federal requirements.

[SB17](#) (Pan) Sets up a state system to recommend strategies for advancing racial equity across state agencies, departments, and the office of the Governor.

[SB545](#) (Wilk) Allows a pupil to repeat their current grade level if the pupil’s parent, guardian or custodian deems it necessary due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the pupil.



Who doesn’t love the California State PTA Convention? The excitement! The energy! The learning opportunities!

This year’s convention, from May 3 to 16, will again be virtual. Even though we won’t be there in person, there will be lots to see and do.

More than 60 workshops and training sessions will be offered, including the following that deal with advocacy and legislation:

- Hot Topics Affecting Our Children and Schools
- Hot Topics in Washington D.C.
- Local Advocacy: From Your Kids to All Children
- What does PTA do in Sacramento Anyway?
- You CAN Create Strong Parent Leaders. Here’s How.
- Distance Learning & Safe School Reopening: PTA’s Response

Don’t worry if you miss a session. You’ll be able to access the workshops online until June 30, but only if you register.

Delegates to the convention will vote on the adoption of a proposed [resolution](#): **Teaching Hard History: American Slavery in K-12 Education.**

Other important business will include approval of changes to the State PTA bylaws and legislation policies, and election of State PTA officers for the next two years.

More information and registration can be found [here](#).

### Fourth District forms DEI Task Force to address diversity, equity and inclusion

PTA has long been an organization that advocates for **all** children and parents. With recent national events bringing focus to the issues of disparity among underrepresented populations, Fourth District PTA is committed to reviewing our policies and procedures to ensure that we will always address and meet the needs of those underrepresented groups.

A task force has been organized with representatives from across the district, with the intent to put into place resources, talking points, and training for each of our units and councils that will address the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. As progress is made, the information will be disseminated in our usual fashion.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Candi Kern at [president@fourthdistrictpta.org](mailto:president@fourthdistrictpta.org) or Erin Jenks (Vice President of Education and Engagement) at [ejenks@fourthdistrictpta.org](mailto:ejenks@fourthdistrictpta.org).