

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

MARCH 2023

Prop. 28 arts funding is an opportunity for PTA advocates

The arts will blossom at our schools next year when Prop. 28 funding is distributed for the first time. PTA advocates should play an active role in deciding how that money is spent.

[Prop. 28](#), approved in the November election, will provide an estimated \$941 million for arts education in the 2023-24 year. This will be in addition to the \$2.3 billion block grant for arts, music and instructional materials that Gov. Newsom included in his proposed budget.

California State PTA is a longtime advocate for [arts](#) education and was a strong supporter of Prop. 28. The measure was passed by 64 percent of voters.

The new funding will be a game changer. California law requires schools to provide arts education but only 1 in 5 of our schools has a full-time arts or music teacher and 62 percent of our students receive no arts education at all, according to a 2019 study. Schools in low-income neighborhoods and rural areas are even less likely to have arts education.

Prop. 28 will change that with new General Fund spending for all schools and an extra boost for schools in low-income areas. Seventy percent of the new funding will be allocated based on enrollment and 30 percent will be distributed based on Title I enrollment, to ensure that students in lower income areas get the programs they deserve. This translates to \$112 for every child in preschool through high school and an additional \$85 for every Title I student, said Austin Beutner, former LA Unified superintendent and the driving force behind the proposition.

Unlike most other education funding, Prop. 28 specifies that the new arts money will go directly to schools, not to districts. Schools and the communities they serve will decide how to spend the money. This is where PTA advocates should get involved.

Why are the arts important?

[Studies](#) have shown that students who participate in arts programs have higher standardized test scores, more involvement in community service and lower dropout

Don't miss Ed100 blogs

Don't miss these important blogs by Carol Kocivar at [Ed100.org](#):

- **Parent voice and the PTA** [with a spotlight on Fourth District PTA]
- **California kids have no right to a quality education**
- **It's time to screen all students for dyslexia risks**

rates. The arts foster critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration and innovation.

“The key is that art is not a luxury,” said Austin Beutner in an [interview](#) at EdSource.org. “It’s the glue that binds together a proper and good education. It binds together literacy, math and critical thinking.”

The arts can help students overcome the negative impacts of the pandemic. An article in [Psychology Today](#) states:

- Mental health issues, caused or exacerbated by the pandemic, can create barriers to learning.
- Arts-based interventions are an effective way to engage students in their own healing and may help restore students' mental well-being.
- Making art can alleviate stress, increases mindfulness, and help people process experiences and feelings in a safe space, research shows.

What you need to know about Prop. 28

The measure sets down several requirements:

- Districts and charter schools with more than 500 students must spend at least 80 percent of the funding to hire staff and must certify that those employees are specifically providing arts education.
- The remaining money can be used for training, musical instruments, supplies and materials, and arts educational partnership programs.
- Prop. 28 can be used for traditional arts such as music, theater, dance and visual arts, as well as more contemporary areas including filmmaking, animation and graphic design.
- School boards must certify Prop. 28 budgets annually, post the expenses on the district's website and submit the information to the state Department of Education.

Resources for arts advocates

CAPTA has numerous resources to help you be an effective advocate. Be sure to [see](#) the **Parents' Guide to Arts Education in California Public School**, which includes examples of arts activities in grades pre-K through high school.

It will be exciting to see new art education opportunities blooming in our schools.

Save the Date

Friday, April 28 at 9:30 a.m.

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Forum

Fourth District PTA members bring their message to Sacramento

Sixty parents, students and school board members went to Sacramento in February to listen to education experts and meet in small groups with our state legislators. Here are the three messages we brought to lawmakers:

1. Thank You

For many years, we have advocated for the funding and resources necessary to provide all children with the education they need to succeed. Now, for the first time in decades, California's per-pupil funding is at the national average instead of the bottom. Beyond that, there is a new focus on providing early education to give kids a stronger start, as well as efforts to get schools serving high-needs students the extra resources they require to bridge the achievement gap. We want you to know that we acknowledge and sincerely appreciate these efforts.

2. Maintain Stability

Just as we thank California's Legislature and Governor for all the work done to improve public education, we encourage you to continue to support our students by maintaining the stability of the progress realized thus far.

Should economic conditions require budget cuts, we ask that priority be given to California's children and youth who are still struggling to recover from the effects of the pandemic, and that you continue to fund those measures that have helped them the most and given them hope for their future. Support their healing and humanity through access to the arts, support their learning and development through equitable access to broadband technology, and support their overall well-being through access to mental health services so that kids are able to engage in effective learning.


3. Protect Schools

School districts remain at risk of being financially undermined by the looming prospect of CalSTRS and CalPERS funding mandates. Money that school districts must spend on retirees is money that cannot be spent on educating today's students. We urge legislators to find a better solution to California's chronic underfunding of its pension systems to ensure the long-term stability of the system which educates our future citizens.

California State PTA's position on diversity, equity and inclusion


DEI—diversity, equity and inclusion—has been the basis of some recent controversy. The following is California State PTA's [position](#), as posted at CAPTA.org:

Diversity, equity and inclusion cannot be the stand-alone work of one committee or even a small group of individuals. It is the work of every PTA member who decides to serve the families and children in their community.

 **Diversity** is representation of, and respect for, people from different backgrounds and identities—including but not limited to race, culture, religion, socio-economic status, age, geographic area, sexual orientation and gender identification, language, learning style and physical appearance.

To embody and live this value, PTAs must:


- Actively recruit and elect a team of leaders who represent the school community you serve.
- Support units from less represented or resourced areas, backgrounds and perspectives.

 **Equity** provides fairness in resources, opportunities and outcomes so that all communities get what they need to be engaged and successful. It moves beyond "equal" to:

1. Recognize and address bias and privilege.
2. Understand and attend to specific individual and community needs, providing additional resources to those with greater needs.

To embody and live this value, PTAs must:

- Prioritize and advocate for innovative, sustainable solutions that work for a diverse range of children and families, especially those underrepresented and/or marginalized in our communities.
- Persist in the face of challenges and hold ourselves and our partners—including educators and policy-makers—accountable.

 **Inclusion** is actions, behaviors and social norms that ensure all people feel they are safe, welcomed and that they belong. This means putting diversity into action with skill and intentionality to ensure everyone feels respected, supported and valued—and can fully participate with equal voice and right to be heard. This includes actively seeking out voices that have been traditionally underrepresented and/or marginalized.

That means tending to power dynamics where they occur and setting up a level playing field for all to engage in our work.

To embody and live this value, PTAs must:

- Engage a diverse range of voices and lived experiences from members and prospective members—and seek to meet individuals and communities where they are—especially those currently or traditionally underrepresented and/or marginalized in our association.
- Solicit stakeholder input, incorporate it in visible and meaningful ways, and share credit.
- Account for cultural, status and power dynamics in our many relationships.