

# Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

APRIL 2023

## California schools should screen students for dyslexia

Dyslexia is a leading cause of illiteracy. Up to one million students in California may have this condition, yet schools are not required to screen for dyslexia so that students can receive the help they need to be successful.

This will change if [SB 691](#) is passed into law.

SB 691, which is supported by California State PTA, would require schools to screen all children in kindergarten to grade 2. Students identified as at risk of dyslexia would receive evidence-based literacy instruction and early intervention in the regular classroom, with schools monitoring their progress. The State Board of Education would be required to develop a list of appropriate evidence-based screening instruments that schools can use.

Dyslexia, which has no relation to intelligence, is a neurological condition that makes reading difficult. An estimated 15 to 20 percent of the population has symptoms of this condition. Students with dyslexia often fall behind in their learning and are less likely to graduate from high school and attend college. Feelings of failure can lead to low self-esteem, anxiety, aggression and other social problems. A 2000 [study](#) of prison inmates in Texas showed that nearly half were dyslexic.

California is one of only 10 states nationwide that do not screen for dyslexia.

“By screening all students for risk of dyslexia early, California can help teachers and families achieve the best learning and life outcomes for all students, close academic achievement gaps, and help end the school-to-prison pipeline,” said Senator Anthony Portantino, the author of the bill.

For more information, see this [blog](#) by Carol Kocivar at Ed100.org.

Other bills supported by CAPTA include:

[AB 19](#) (Patterson, Joe) Requires all schools to maintain

## CAPTA Advocacy Webinar

Join the California State PTA Legislation Team for a monthly informational briefing, followed by an opportunity to speak with Legislation Team members, in small group settings, to ask questions and discuss effective ways to advocate at your school, district, and greater community.

The next webinar, a Convention preview, will be held from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 18. Please register in advance [here](#).

on site at least two doses of medication to reverse opioid overdoses.

[AB 273](#) (Ramos) Requires a county to take specific actions when a child who is receiving foster services is absent from foster care

[AB 579](#) (Ting) Requires all new school buses to be zero-emission vehicles, where feasible, beginning in 2035.

[AB 800](#) (Ortega) The first full week in May would be “Workplace Readiness Week.” During that week schools would be required to educate pupils on their rights as workers.

[AB 1186](#) (Bonta) Removes the ability of a court to require a juvenile offender to pay restitution and instead allows the court to order the minor to participate in a restorative justice program, perform community service, or participate in an educational, employment, youth development, or mental health program.

[SB 274](#) (Skinner) Schools would not be allowed to suspend or expel grade 1 through 12 students for disrupting school activities or willfully defying school personnel.

[SB 760](#) (Newman) Requires every school to provide at least one all-gender restroom for pupil use by 2025.

A complete list of bills supported by CAPTA is [here](#).

### Fourth District PTA Superintendents Forum

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

Orange County Department of Education, Bldg. D  
200 Kalmus Drive, Costa Mesa

Don't miss one of the most interesting and popular  
advocacy events of the year!

Confirmed guests:



Jerry Almandarez  
Santa Ana USD



Katherine Stopp, Ed.D.  
Fountain Valley SD



Brinda Leon  
Brea Olinda USD

Free and open to all PTA members

## Advocacy opportunities at the California State PTA Convention

This year's California State PTA Convention in Sacramento will include all of the things that make this annual event interesting and exciting—workshops, exhibits, guest speakers, a display of Reflections artwork, and general meetings to conduct the important business of our organization. The convention runs from April 21 to 23.

This year will be especially exciting for Orange County as our own Shereen Walter (former Fourth District PTA vice president for advocacy) will be installed as CAPTA president by Fourth District PTA advocate Kathy Moffat.

Convention workshops that advocates may want to attend are:

- Demystifying Public Education Funding
- Avenues for Student Advocacy
- Effective Advocacy: Be a Changemaker!
- Meet the Advocates!
- PTA Resolutions – Representing the Voice of our Membership

## PTA unit and council advocacy should be a group effort

PTA advocacy should not be a solo endeavor. If you are the lone advocacy representative for your unit or council, consider enlisting others in the cause. Form a committee. With more hands on deck, you can get more done. Bigger projects, like a candidate forum for your school board election or a letter-writing campaign, are easier to accomplish with a committee.

There are other potential benefits. Having a committee will keep your local advocacy program strong. By including old and new members, you will benefit from the experience of seasoned advocacy reps as you support and train newbies.

Here are two examples of council advocacy groups in Fourth District:

### **Capistrano Unified Council of PTSAs' Advocacy Team**

This group is open to advocacy reps from all of the district's 59 school sites. District staff attend the monthly meetings to provide updates and guest speakers are invited to present information on specific topics. Advocacy reps can ask questions and bring up issues of concern. CAPTA positions on bills and other PTA business are discussed. A committee sets up meetings with individual legislators at their offices.

The team is currently led by co-chairs. Any costs, such as sending the chair to Sacramento Safari and helping units to attend the Safari, are covered by the Capistrano Unified Council of PTSAs.

In the past two years the Advocacy Team has promoted an effort to "Raise the Base" of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). This project was launched

when advocates realized that special services made possible by federal Covid relief funds would not be sustained by LCFF when the federal funding expired. The team worked with district administrators, district employee associations and PTSA leaders to spread awareness. The team also set up social media accounts, connected with PTAs in other school districts that were looking for a higher base, and organized letter-writing campaigns to the governor and state legislators.

- There is also important business to be done. Four resolutions have been submitted for approval by the membership. Resolutions help set the direction of the PTA advocacy and determine what issues will be supported by the organization. This year's resolutions are:
- **Resolution A: Equitable Literacy for All Students**
  - **Resolution B: Inclusive Education for Students with Cognitive Disabilities**
  - **Resolution C: Synthetic and Tobacco-Free Nicotine Products**
  - **Resolution D: Aid to Victims of Sexual Violence and Their Families**

If your PTA unit or council is sending a delegate to the convention, you should read these [resolutions](#) and prepare to discuss them at a meeting. Your PTA should vote on how you would like your delegate to vote on the resolution at the convention.

For more convention information, go to [CAPTA.org](http://CAPTA.org).

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### **Legislative Coalition, Orange Unified School District**

The Legislative Coalition is a committee of the OUSD school board and is open to parents from all district schools. School district administrators, school board members, leadership from classified and certificated employee associations, and field representatives from state and Congressional offices also participate in the monthly meetings.

The meetings include reports from the school district and from legislators' representatives. The Legislative Coalition takes positions on state bills, subject to the approval of the school board. Before Covid, the coalition sponsored one-day trips by members to Sacramento. In response to concerns expressed by coalition members, the school district formed a Math Task Force to get community input on math instruction in the schools.

The coalition has a chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer. Each participating school is asked to donate \$35 to help send one member to Sacramento Safari.

These are some ideas that you can use to organize your own unit or council advocacy committee.