

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

MAY 2023

Why is PTA advocacy important for all members?

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 legislative 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 picks an advocacy representative.** This can be an elected office or an appointed position.
- **Educate your advocacy representative about Fourth District PTA resources that make the job easy.** These include this newsletter, talking points to present at PTA meetings, free informative Advocacy Forums, the Advocacy Resource Notebook, a speakers bureau and more!
- **Include advocacy in your PTA budget for next year.**

CAPTA Advocacy Webinars

The California State PTA Legislation Team has planned two webinars for May:

- Tuesday, May 16—"Wins report sharing what our advocacy has achieved in the legislative cycle."
- Tuesday, May 30—"May budget revise."

The webinars run from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Please register in advance [here](#).

- **Plan to send a representative to Sacramento Safari**, scheduled for February 26 and 27 in 2024. Include \$900 in your PTA budget for the trip.

May Revise Budget must deal with uncertainties in revenue

The governor's May revise budget, an update of the initial budget proposed in January, is usually a more realistic plan based on actual tax revenues received by the state through April. This year the governor and lawmakers will have to deal with several uncertainties as they craft a final budget, according to a recent [report](#) by Gabriel Petek, the state's nonpartisan Legislative Analyst.

There is still the risk of a recession, Petek writes, but how severe that might be is in question. In addition, the tax deadline was extended from April to October due to the storms we experienced and this could lead to errors in estimating state revenues.

High tax revenues and substantial federal funding led to large budget surpluses during the last two years. Most of this was allocated to one-time purposes and temporary spending phased in over several years. In January the budget deficit was estimated at \$27 billion, but anticipated revenues are still 20 percent higher than pre-pandemic levels.

The state currently has about \$27 billion in its rainy-day fund, plus almost \$10 billion in the education reserve fund. Petek recommends that lawmakers not dip into this money and look for other ways to balance the budget so that the reserve is available if revenue forecasts are incorrect or a more serious recession develops.

Congratulations!



Shereen Walter
California State PTA President



Kathleen Fay
CAPTA Director of Legislation

Both Shereen and Kathleen are past Fourth District PTA vice presidents for advocacy!

Legislative bills supported by California State PTA

California State PTA in April took support positions on the following legislative bills:

[AB 223](#) (Ward) would require any petition for change of gender or sex identifier filed in court by a minor to be sealed to protect their privacy.

[AB 230](#) (Reyes) An existing requirement that schools serving grades 6 through 12 provide free menstrual products in restrooms would be extended to include schools with grades 3 through 12.

[AB 249](#) (Holden) Would require testing for lead in the drinking water at schools, reporting of results, and mitigation measures if lead levels are too high.

[AB 377](#) (Muratsuchi) Increases the funding for a state grant program that encourages career technical education programs from \$300 million to \$450 million per year.

[AB 957](#) (Wilson) Would require that if one parent does not sign a minor's petition for a legal name change, the court shall "strongly consider" that affirming the minor's gender identity is in the best interest of the child.

[AB 1207](#) (Irwin) Would prohibit the manufacture, sale, marketing, or advertising of cannabis products that are attractive to children or flavored.

[AB 1503](#) (Lee) Excused absence from school for a religious retreat is limited to one school day per semester. (Currently it is four hours per semester.)

[SB 9](#) (Cortese) A young person coming out of foster care would continue to receive state assistance to the age of 22

if he or she is homeless or at risk of homelessness.

[SB 291](#) (Newman) Schools would not be allowed to restrict a student's recess for disciplinary reasons unless there is an immediate threat to the physical safety of a student.

[SB 323](#) (Portantino) Requires each school site to have an Inclusive School Emergency Plan and to include additional accommodations for a pupil with exceptional needs.

[SB 333](#) (Cortese) Homeless grade 12 students would receive a guaranteed income of \$1,000 from April through August, 2025.

[SB 342](#) (Seyarto) When the history-social science curriculum framework is revised in 2024, it would be required to include financial literacy information for grades K-12.

[SB 394](#) (Gonzalez) Would require the development of a Master Plan for Healthy, Sustainable, and Climate-Resilient Schools by November 1, 2024 if funding is appropriated for this purpose.

[SB 473](#) (Allen) The existing restrictions on new teenage drivers would be extended to include 18- to 20-year-olds.

[SB 673](#) (Bradford) Law enforcement agencies would be authorized to activate "Ebony Alerts" when Black youth, including young women and girls, are missing.

[SB 767](#) (Rubio) Would require a child to complete one year of Kindergarten before attending first grade.

To see all CAPTA-supported bills, go [here](#).

The role of school district boards and the county board of education

There are 28 school districts in Orange County, each with its own school board. There is also an Orange County Board of Education. What are the responsibilities of each of these bodies?

Each school district is governed by five to seven trustees, or school board members, who are elected by the citizens of that district. The school board determines the basic policies and direction of the school district. Most importantly, the school board approves the district's budget and Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), which together determine how your district will allocate its funding to meet its goals and support the success of every student.

The superintendent, hired by the school board, carries out the board's policies, hires other district staff, and oversees the day-to-day operation of the district.

District school boards meet once or twice a month and all meetings, with certain exceptions, must be open to the public. You can find out when your school board meets, and what is on the agenda, by going to your school district's website.

State law requires every California county to have an office of education that oversees the finances and opera-

tion of school districts in that county. This includes approving each school district's budget and LCAP. In our county the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) fulfills this function. OCDE also provides an array of services and resources to students and school districts. These include teacher training, technical support, legal services, and alternative education programs for certain students.

The OCDE is directed by a board of five trustees, who are elected by the voters in each of five trustee districts in Orange County. The Orange County Superintendent of Schools also is elected by the voters of Orange County.

In addition to approving the OCDE budget and other oversight responsibilities, the county board of education serves as an appeal board for local cases involving expulsions or inter-district transfers. The county board also has the power to approve charter school applications that have been denied by local school boards.

The Orange County Board of Education meets once a month, usually on a Wednesday, at 10 a.m. Information about the meetings, including the current agenda and transcripts of past meetings, is available at [ocde.us](#).