

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

OCTOBER 2023

Fourth District PTA opposes change in OCBE duties

Fourth District PTA members voted to send a letter to the California State Board of Education regarding a proposed change in the duties of the Orange County Board of Education (OCBE). The vote was taken at the Association Meeting on September 20.

The OCBE has submitted a request to assume the duties of the Orange County Committee on School District Organization. This would allow the OCBE members to create their own trustee areas, among other responsibilities. The letter from Fourth District PTA asks the State Board of Education to deny this request.

The County Committee is composed of 11 members, many of whom are current or former school district trustees. The members are elected to four-year terms by a Nomination Committee consisting of one school board member from each of Orange County's 31 school districts and community college districts.

In addition to establishing the OCBE trustee areas after each 10-year National Census, the County Committee approves changes in school district trustee areas, approves changes in the number of trustees in a district, adopts alternative methods of electing board members, and considers petitions to transfer territory from one school district to another.

Fourth District is opposed to transferring these duties to the OCBE for the following reasons:

- The eleven members of the County Committee are elected by representatives from all of the school and community college districts in Orange County. Thus,

it is a broadly representative group reflecting the views of every part of the county.

- The same budget and support staff are needed to accomplish the work, whether it is done by the 11-member committee or the 5-member board. Therefore, eliminating the County Committee would not result in greater efficiency or cost savings.
- Most large counties in California use a separate county committee to deal with these responsibilities.
- Orange County's current system is similar to California's statewide practice of using a bipartisan Citizens Redistricting Commission to draw the lines for state legislators, eliminating any potential perception that lawmakers are creating districts that benefit their own election prospects.

At their September meeting, the majority of Orange County school district superintendents voted to send a letter to the state Board of Education opposing the OCBE proposal.

The County Committee last drew lines for the OCBE trustee areas after the 2020 National Census. The OCBE objected to the map that the committee approved and took the matter to court. The Superior Court upheld the committee's authority, but the OCBE has appealed this decision, "causing the county office of education to expend hundreds of thousands of dollars on litigation rather than on the education of students," according to a [resolution](#) approved by the OCBE in August, 2023.

Now is a great time to visit your state legislators

With the state legislature in recess until January, this is the perfect time to visit your state lawmakers in their local offices. Here are some tips before you go.

- **Determine the reason for your visit.** A small group of members from your PTA may want to introduce yourselves and talk about the relevance of PTA. If you have a specific issue, make sure it is something the legislator can address, rather than something that should be dealt with at the school district level.
- **Call for an appointment.** Specify how much time you will need and the reason for your visit.
- **Research the legislator.** Find out what bills he or she proposed or supported. Look for common ground.
- **Draft an agenda for your group** that includes an

opening, introductions and an order of PTA issues to be discussed. Assign a role to each person, including leader and note taker.

- **Be respectful.** Dress in a business-like manner. Arrive on time. Listen to what the legislator says. Leave after your appointed time, unless the legislator continues the conversation. Build a positive relationship.
- **Present PTA positions.** Research those ahead of time. If you're not sure about an issue that comes up in the conversation, tell the legislator you will get back with the information. Personal positions should be communicated at another time.

If you are not sure who your legislators are, go to: [find your rep.](#)

Get ready to be involved in your school district's LCAP

Every year, you have an opportunity to get involved in decisions regarding how money is spent in your schools. You do this through the development of your school district's the Local Control and Accountability Plan, or LCAP. Now is a good time to get started by educating yourself.

What is the LCAP? It's a plan that every school district, charter school, and county department of education must develop to show how money will be spent to support positive outcomes for all students and to meet the special needs of students who are low-income, English learners, homeless, or in foster care. The LCAP is required by the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), California's school funding law.

The three-year plan is updated every year and is approved by school district trustees along with the district budget in June.

Save the date!

Thursday, November 9
Fourth District PTA Advocacy Forum

Don't miss these valuable blogs on Ed100

How does California's education system work?

Ed100, an invaluable online "crash course" on California's public education system, has launched a video summarizing the first chapter of the course in about eight minutes. Additional chapter summary videos will be released in the coming weeks and months.

The idea is for school supporters to watch these videos together "to help communities get in the habit of talking and learning about the education system proactively, not just in response to tragedy or partisan provocation," writes Ed100 founder Jeff Camp.

To help spark important conversations, each video comes with a discussion guide, provided in English and Spanish (as are all of the Ed100 lessons).

You can find more information [here](#).

Learning to Vote

This important [blog](#) by Carol Kocivar is about the importance of teaching children to vote.

"Children are not born with a Democracy gene," she writes. "It is the responsibility of each generation to prepare children to be responsible citizens. Schools play a critical role in this process – in fact, a core purpose of public education is to teach children how to be good citizens."

The article goes on to describe state curriculum requirements and a variety of resources to help students become engaged in the voting process.

The LCAP must address eight state priorities: basic services, state standards, course access, student achievement, student outcomes, student engagement, parent involvement and school climate.

Districts must involve parents in the LCAP process, along with students, staff, and the community.

What can you do to get involved? Start by looking at your school district's current LCAP, which should be posted on your district's website. Is it easy to read? Does it effectively describe your district's priorities?

Here are some online resources that will help you get involved in a meaningful way:

- Basic [information](#) from California State PTA in six languages.
- [Information](#) from Ed100.
- An LCAP [Checklist](#) for Parents and Student Leaders, developed by CAPTA and Ed100.
- [Information](#) from the California State Department of Education

This is why...

By Gisela Meier, Advocacy Communicator Editor

My husband and I recently attended a concert by the Pacific Symphony in Costa Mesa. One of the pieces performed that night was "Vital Sines," a sparkling, innovative concerto by a young composer named Viet Cuong. The audience responded with a standing ovation.

Before the performance, conductor Carl St. Clair invited Cuong to the stage to introduce himself and talk about his music. Cuong said that as a child he struggled to find his place and was often lonely until he entered middle school and joined the band. There he found his community and his passion.

With the loving encouragement and support of his father, he pursued a career in music. Viet's compositions have been performed at Carnegie Hall, the Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, and venues around the world. He is the composer-in-residence at Pacific Symphony as well as an assistant professor of Music Composition and Theory at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

It warms my heart to know that Cuong found a place to belong and his purpose in life because his school had a music program.

This is why we advocate for arts education in our schools.

Stay up to date on the latest information regarding Prop 28 arts education funding at [CreateCA.org](#).