

Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

JANUARY 2025

What is the role of the national Department of Education?

President-elect Donald Trump has promised to shut down the federal Department of Education (ED) and send “all education and education work and needs back to the States.”

This might be a good time to look at the role that Department plays in our schools.

The ED was established as a Cabinet level agency in 1980. Prior to this, a department or office of education existed to collect information that would help the States establish effective school systems. The federal government also supported the establishment of colleges and universities and promoted specific educational programs. In the 1960s and 1970s the department became involved in the enforcement of anti-poverty and civil rights legislation that provided assistance to needy students and prohibited discrimination.

As a Cabinet level department, the ED continues to play an essential role in enforcing civil rights in schools and providing information about effective education programs.

According to the department’s website at ed.gov, “Today, ED operates programs that touch on every area and level of education. The Department's elementary and secondary programs annually serve nearly 18,200 school districts and over 50 million students attending roughly 98,000 public schools and 32,000 private schools. Department programs also provide grant, loan, and work-study assistance to more than 12 million postsecondary students.

“Despite the growth of the Federal role in education, the Department never strayed far from what would become its official mission: to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

“The Department carries out its mission in two major ways. First, the Secretary and the Department play a leadership role in the ongoing national dialogue over how to improve the results of our education system for all students. This involves such activities as raising national and community awareness of the education challenges confronting the Nation, disseminating the latest discoveries on what works in teaching and learning, and helping communities work out solutions to difficult educational issues.

“Second, the Department pursues its twin goals of access and excellence through the administration of programs that cover every area of education and range from preschool education through postdoctoral research.”

What about money for schools? The federal government provides about one tenth of the California education budget, with most of that going toward school breakfast and lunch programs and teacher salaries for early education in disadvantaged communities.

For more information, see this lesson at Ed100.

For information about Trump’s nominee for Secretary of Education, see this article at EdSource.

OC Senate and Assembly election results

The results of the General Election in Orange County were certified by Registrar of Voters Bob Page on December 3.

In State Senate District 37, Stephen Choi replaced Josh Newman.

In the State Assembly, incumbents Phillip Chen (59th District), Blanca Pacheco (64th District), Sharon Quirk-Silva (67th District), Avelino Valencia (68th District), Tri Ta (70th District), Kate Sanchez (71st District), Diane Dixon (72nd District), Cottie Petrie-Norris (73rd District), and Laurie Davies (74th District) were re-elected.

State Senator Janet Nguyen was elected to the Orange County Board of Supervisors, leaving a vacancy in the 36th State Senate District. A Special Election for the Senate District will be held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025. If no candidate receives 50 percent or more of the votes in that election, a Special General Election will be held at a later date.



**Fourth District PTA
Advocacy Forum**
January 24, 9:30 to 11:30
Fountain Valley School District
10055 Slater Avenue
Fountain Valley

How to be an effective advocate in your school district

Learn more about how local school board meetings are planned and executed, including:

- How to read an agenda;
- How to advocate for students and families at a school board meeting;
- The Brown Act and how it relates to School Board Meetings;
- How to communicate to your community about issues that affect your students.

Budget process may be easier this year according to LAO

The start of another year means the beginning of a new state budget cycle in Sacramento. A recent [report](#) by the state Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) indicates that it may be an easier process than last year.

California's economy has been in a two-year slow-down —“sluggish” but “milder than a recession”—marked by higher unemployment and weak consumer spending, the LAO says. Nevertheless, a booming stock market has led to a surge in earnings for high-income Californians and this has led to an increase in state tax revenues.

“With a boost from the booming stock market, our forecast puts tax collections on track to beat expectations by \$7 billion over the budget window (that is, from 2023-24 through 2025-26),” the report states. (State budget planning always involves the next three fiscal years.)

The LAO says that as state legislators addressed last year's budget problem, they made proactive decisions to address anticipated problems for this year. These included \$5.5 billion in temporary revenue increases and a \$7 billion withdrawal from the state's rainy-day fund. As a result, the 2025-26 budget remains “roughly balanced.”

Nevertheless, the LAO predicts double-digit deficits in future years. Revenue will not increase enough to cover increased spending. “In our view, this year's budget does not have capacity for new commitments, particularly ones that are ongoing,” the report states. Unless there is a broader economic recovery, the LAO's predictions remain uncertain.

The state budget process

Each year the governor and the state legislature must work together to determine the state budget, using revenue numbers that change from month to month.

The first step in the process is the presentation of a proposed budget, based on estimated tax receipts, which the Governor must submit to the Legislature by January 10.

During the next months, Assembly and Senate budget committees will review the proposal and develop their own versions of the budget.

In mid-May, the governor will issue an updated “May revise” version of the budget based on actual tax revenues received to date. A conference committee may meet to resolve the differences between the Assembly and Senate versions of the budget, and there may be continuing discussions between legislators and the Governor.

How state laws are developed

January 6 marks the beginning of a new legislative session in Sacramento. Here is a brief review of the law-making process.

When a bill is introduced in the Assembly or Senate, it must be approved by several committees in that house before a debate and vote by the entire house of origin. The bill then goes to the other house, where it again goes through a committee process before a debate and vote by that house.

If the second house amends the bill and members of the first house do not concur with those changes, a conference committee of three Senators and three Assembly Members meets to iron out the differences. The new version must be approved by both the Senate and the Assembly before being sent to the Governor.

The Governor can sign the bill into law or do nothing, which also enacts the bill into law. If the Governor vetoes a bill, the legislature has 60 days to override that veto with a two-thirds vote of both the Senate and the Assembly.



Sacramento Safari

February 24 and 25

An experience not to be missed!

Full information and registration at FourthDistrictPTA.org

If you are going to Sacramento Safari, be sure to attend the Orientation Meeting on February 18 at 9:30 a.m. You will get important information that will help you get the most out of the Safari.

Annual report on OC children is out

The 30th Annual Report on the Conditions of Children in Orange County has been released by the Orange County Social Services Agency.

The report covers the areas of good health, economic well-being, educational achievement and safe homes and communities. Much of the information is broken down by city or school district.

Read the report [here](#).

