

# Fourth District PTA Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT PTA ADVOCACY TEAM

MARCH 2025

## National PTA urges action on federal education proposals

### Take action today to urge Congress to protect the U.S. Department of Education!

Our nation's public schools serve over 80 percent of our nation's students, and programs and funding streams administered by the U.S. Department of Education—including the Office of Civil Rights, disbursement of Title I and Title II funding, grants through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and Statewide Family Engagement Centers program—serve students and families most in need of vital supports across the country. These programs are all essential to improving academic outcomes and student well-being and cannot be dismantled or reallocated without having devastating impacts on the children, families and schools they serve.

In response to recent efforts to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education, Representative Suzanne Bonamici of Oregon introduced H. Res. 94, a resolution asserting Congress's commitment to protecting the U.S. Department of Education, emphasizing its role for families, children, and schools and the importance of maintaining funding streams like IDEA and Title I that are managed by the Department.

Urge your members of Congress to co-sponsor H. Res. 94 [here](#).

A bill called the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA - S. 292, H.R. 817) was recently introduced in Congress. Although marketed as “choice” for parents, the bill would actually create the first ever nationalized voucher program and redirect billions of taxpayer dollars away from our public schools towards private and religious institutions and homeschooling. The vast majority (over 80%) of children and families in this country are served by public schools, and this proposal would undermine their education by diverting funds away from already under-resourced public schools.

The reality is that even well-intentioned voucher programs have proven ineffective in improving students' academic achievement. Such systems usually lack accountability, they deprive students of the rights and protections they would receive in public schools, and they fail in providing adequate services for students most in need, including students with disabilities, low-income students, and students who are English learners. Moreover, the “choice” inherent in such systems lies not with the families but rather with the institutions themselves who often deny enrollment. In some communities, such as rural areas, there is no “choice” at all when non-public options are hundreds of miles away.

Send a message [here](#).

## Sacramento Safari speakers discuss a variety of education issues

Here are some key points from our speakers at Sacramento Safari:

**Shereen Walter, California State PTA President:** What you do matters now more than ever. PTA supports all children and families. If our families are under attack and we don't speak up we are complicit. If you want CAPTA to take a position on a particular bill, request that through an email.

**Josiah Kitonga, California State PTA Managing Director,** described the organization of the State PTA office, which serves about 550,000 PTA members statewide.

**Akshaya Aalla, Student Member of the California State PTA Board of Managers:** Student representatives to PTA bring a perspective that is often overlooked. Akshaya organized a three-day conference for 75 students that developed a set of proposals which are now being drafted into bills.

**Ken Kapphahn, Senior Fiscal and Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO):** The LAO provides

nonpartisan analysis and advice to state legislators as they work on the California budget. There continue to be concerns about volatility in the national economy. The Governor's budget includes \$7.8 billion in education funding. Major proposals include \$2.1 billion for a cost-of-living increase, \$746 million for Transitional Kindergarten, \$1.8 billion for discretionary grants to school districts, and \$379 million for learning recovery. The budget would delay \$1.6 billion in Prop. 98 funding, creating a debt that the state would have to pay if tax revenues meet expectations.

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### Save the date!

Friday, April 25

9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

**Fourth District PTA Advocacy Forum**  
Program to be announced

## Fourth District PTA's message to California legislators

More than 80 Orange County parents, students and school board members attended Sacramento Safari. Here is the message we brought to our state legislators.

- **Thank you for improving public education for our children!** The legislature has made education funding a priority in recent years. We appreciate the provision of universal school meals, working to bridge the achievement gap through targeted LCFF funds, improvements in arts education access, and services that offer social-emotional and mental health support for students. Efforts to improve literacy through dyslexia screenings and updated methodologies are crucial to reaching the academic success we all seek for our public school students.
- **Climate-related crises are having an impact on our public schools and communities.** Some have been impacted by wildfires, heat, storms, flooding, and other climate-related events. Others will be. These issues affect all of us and must be addressed.

### Safari speakers (continued from page 1)

**Scott Fitzpatrick, Arts Coordinator, Orange County Department of Education:** Parents should be actively involved in developing arts education programs at their schools through Prop. 28. The funding must be used to create new programs and to make sure all students have access to arts education. Contact him if you need help. [714 966-4128]

**Briana Mullen, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Education Justice Academy:** School boards are the foundational building blocks of our democracy, but only 10 percent of voters vote for them. When advocating with board members, look for areas where you agree. Share your personal experience.

**Carol Kocivar, Ed100:** We need to pay attention to the federal government, which wants to change how schools are funded and how children are treated. We need to speak against proposals for a national voucher program.

**Lee Angela Reed, Partner, Capitol Advisors Group:** Of the 120 members of the State Legislature, 35 are brand new. "Everyone considers themselves an expert on education because they had one." The budget situation is better than expected, but there's not a lot of extra money.

**Chris Reeve, Legislative Director, California School Board Association:** The current State Legislature is the most diverse in history. CSBA opposes a proposal in the Governor's budget to delay \$1.6 billion in Prop. 98 funding until there is more information about tax revenues for this year. CSBA believes this will make the Prop. 98 funding guarantee meaningless.

**Senator Sasha Rénee Pérez, Senate Education Committee Chair:** Schools must be safe places for chil-

- **Federal instability threatens student well-being.** Recent political events have created circumstances that generate fear and a profound sense of insecurity among many of our students and their family members. **It is imperative for schools to be safe places for children and youth** where they can learn and grow without fear, and where families can freely support their children's education. Thank you for any efforts or legislation that can help protect California's schools from initiatives that would further marginalize our most vulnerable students. Please do what you can to preserve vital services and safeguards (such as gender equality, immigrant and human rights, data privacy, and programs such as Title I, Head Start, IDEA funding, access to college, etc.). We must unite to support ALL children and families.
- **A long-term approach to stable education funding is needed.** We ask that you consider fiscal solutions that will eventually provide for the long-term stability of public education and its funding sources.

dren and families. Making sure Prop. 98 is fully funded is her priority. She has several education bills: SB 341, to encourage school gardens, SB 411, to provide free school lunches during the summer, and SB 98, to require school districts and charter schools to notify pupils, parents, staff, and the community when ICE is at a school site.

**Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi:** The legislature has been able to protect education funding thanks to the rainy-day fund. Regardless of political party, we all want good safe public schools and the wellbeing of our children. He has introduced a bill to add Special Education to the high needs categories in the Local Control Funding Formula.

**Senator Steven Choi:** The senator has introduced SB 267, which would give teachers a \$250 tax credit for the school supplies they purchase with their own money, and SB 529, which would give parents a tax credit for donating to a college tuition program.

**Josh Newman, Former California State Senator:** It takes years to make real changes in the public education system. We should work collectively to change things quickly. Recess is a vitally important part of the day for students and should be protected. Physical fitness testing should be brought back to schools.

### Sacramento Safari attendees!

Be sure to attend the Sacramento Safari Debrief Friday, March 14, at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom  
You will receive a link via email.