

# 32<sup>nd</sup> District PTA Legislative Advocacy News

## Cut\$ Hurt Kids

By Nancy Vandell, vice president for education and legislation  
June 1, 2011

### PTA Members Advocate for School Funding

Thousands of PTA members throughout 32<sup>nd</sup> District (Contra Costa County) joined their nearly one million counterparts across the state in advocating for adequate funding of education and children's services over the past two months. Many thanks to each of you who took the time to let Sacramento know how important temporary revenues extension is for schools.

Activities have included:

- **Letter and email campaign:** we have delivered over 12,000 letters to the Governor and legislative leaders signed by PTA members around the county.
- **Rallies in San Francisco, Concord, Walnut Creek and San Ramon:** PTA members joined in rallies for education, and spoke out on behalf of children.
- **School Funding presentations:** Workshops on how schools are funded, current funding concerns and how to advocate were held in Pleasant Hill, Danville and San Ramon. Copies of the handouts are on our website, as is a new publication from EdSource on the impact of the budget deficit on schools.
- **Visits with legislators:** PTA leaders have met with our local legislators and staff of legislative leaders to encourage continued efforts to pass the tax extensions. All five of the state senators and assembly members representing areas in our county support the revenue extensions.

### What's Next?

**Parent voices calling for the legislature to extend temporary taxes must be continued**, even as the school year closes. We need to keep up the pressure to ensure our schools will avoid even more devastating budget cuts. During June and throughout the summer, here are some things you can do:

- Call, send letters or email the Governor and legislative leaders. Updated letters are available on our website (<http://www.32ndpta.org/programs/advocacy.html>), along with instructions.
- Enlist friends and family around the state to contact their legislators. Go to [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org) for more information.
- Call or send postcards to the Governor and legislators while on vacation. Add their contact information to your cell phone before you go, and make a phone call while on route.

- For ongoing and timely information, please sign up now for California State PTA Legislation Alerts at [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org) (click the button on the right).

## **What Else Can PTAs do?**

- **Educate** your members and the public about budget concerns. District Legislation Committee members are available to speak on the subject at your meetings. Contact [nmvandell@comcast.net](mailto:nmvandell@comcast.net) to arrange a speaker.
- **Run a voter registration drive.** School registration is a great opportunity to provide voter registration forms and information. In many of our communities, voter turnout in November's election was lower than average. Does your high school have a program for sending voter registration forms to students as they turn 18? Visit the 32<sup>nd</sup> District website for detailed information on how to hold such a drive.
- **Establish a Legislative Advocacy chairman or vice president position in your PTA unit.** We can provide support and training.

PTA supports the Governor's May budget revision proposing a combination of cuts and new revenues, although we strongly encourage the revenue extensions to be decided upon by June 30, so that schools can adequate funding for the coming year. The legislature has already passed over \$11.5 billion in cuts, many affecting children's health and human services. The budget proposal strives to avoid the gimmicks, borrowing and unrealistic assumptions that have plagued budgets over the past many years. This proposal also seeks to somewhat protect education funding, which has taken the largest hit over the past three years of cuts (\$20 billion in cuts, or \$1,900 per student). However, it depends on extensions of taxes raised two years ago (and set to expire June 30) being approved. Much of the \$12.5 billion in revenue extensions are allocated for education funding.

## **Vote on June 7**

PTA supports the *California Cancer Research Act*, which increases tax on cigarettes by \$1.00 per pack for use in smoking prevention and treatment.

## **Thanks to the Committee!**

The two-year term of our new legislative advocacy committee expires June 30. Janet Abelson will take over as vice president for education and legislation. The committee has accomplished a great deal with a small group of dedicated volunteers, and I thank the following for their service: Sarah Butler, Kelly Kaplan, Nancy Kendzierski, Clara King, Denise Lambert, Gayle Larson, Kathy Rabun, and Kathy Ranstrom.

