

[view this email in browser](#)**March 2021****Legislation Team**

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THE LEGISLATURE TACKLES THE DIGITAL DIVIDE



The need for robust broadband is front and center on the California Legislative agenda this year as the pandemic forced heightened awareness about inequities of the digital divide. Children and families struggle throughout the state to use the internet for work and school.

Here is a quick rundown of some of the bills the legislature is considering:

California Advanced Services Fund

AB 14 prioritizes the deployment of broadband infrastructure in California's most vulnerable and unserved rural and urban communities by extending the ongoing collection of funds deposited into the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) to provide communities with grants necessary to bridge the digital divide.

Status: **PTA Supports**

SB 4 will secure continuous funding and implement a number of critically needed reforms to the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF). These changes will help close the digital divide and meet the connectivity needs of Californians, both during this unprecedented pandemic and for decades to come. SB 4 will update the CASF by making communities eligible for grants based on their true internet need, promoting deployment of high-speed, 100mbps broadband, and making it easier for local governments to apply for grants and finance their own infrastructure. **Status:** **PTA Supports**

AB 34 proposes the California Broadband for All Bond Act of 2022 for the November 8, 2022 General Election ballot. It prioritizes underserved and disadvantaged communities. **Status:** *The California State PTA is conducting a study of this bill.*

California Connect Program

AB 1176 requires the Public Utilities to develop, implement, and administer the California Connect Program to ensure that high-speed broadband service is available to every household in the state at affordable rates. **Status:** *The California State PTA is reviewing this bill.*

PTA'S ADVOCACY AGENDA FOR EQUITY



The one clear message from this past year is that children and their families throughout California and the nation face great inequities.

Whether it is income inequality or racial injustice as we have seen with the rise in targeted violence against Asian Americans, or education access and opportunity, it is our responsibility as PTA members to advocate for laws that address these issues.

“Let us have no more croaking as to what cannot be done; let us see what can be done, and above all see that it is done.”

That admonition from PTA founder, Alice McLellan Birney, over 100 years ago rings true today and should guide our advocacy efforts.

So, what can PTA do? We have to advocate to change many inequitable systems and policies that deny many children the chance to reach their full potential.

“Every policy in every institution in every community in every nation is producing or sustaining either racial inequity or equity between racial groups.” - Ibram X. Kendi, author of *How to be An Anti Racist*

How well children do in school is tied directly to how well they are supported at home and in the community. If they are homeless or have unstable housing, if they have health needs that are not addressed, if they hear gunshots from their bedrooms, if their parents are not earning enough to support a family, their chances of success in school and in life are diminished.

That's why PTA's agenda for equity not only addresses education but also the economic policies that have left far too many families struggling to make ends meet. A budget really is a reflection of our values.

[Click here](#) to read the **advocacy agenda for equity** on the California State PTA website.

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Poverty, income and racial inequities that affect millions of California families.

Early learning: Quality childcare and preschool programs for all children.

Health and welfare: School and community programs that protect the health and welfare of all children and families, including community schools, school based health services, counseling, nutrition and other support services.

Education Funding: Stable, equitable and adequate funding to meet the diverse needs of all

learning.

Curriculum: A full curriculum that provides all students with the knowledge, skills and support they need to thrive and be responsible citizens in a democracy. All students should be taught the arts, PE and civics. Course work should provide an education that is personalized, culturally relevant and responsive, and intentionally addresses racism and bias to counteract the institutional and structural biases and related traumas that often drive inequitable outcomes for students.

Teaching Social and emotional learning skills so that all students can connect to, the student community.



DON'T MISS THE APRIL 7 ADVOCACY WEBINAR



Join California State PTA Director of Legislation Shereen Walter and members of the Legislation Team on **Wednesday, April 7, 2021** from 7:00-8:00 p.m. for the monthly webinar in which they discuss the latest legislation affecting families and children and their recent advocacy efforts.

Registration link:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/31940121174953740>

If your computer does not have speakers or you otherwise have trouble hearing the audio once you've logged in, mute your speakers and call (631) 992-3221 to hear the discussion. Use attendee PIN number 300-067-555. (**Note:** you cannot use this phone number to hear the webinar unless you are registered and logged in.)

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