California State PTA
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CONDUCTING A STUDY FOR YOUR PTA

WHY CONDUCT A STUDY?

When a PTA and its members are concerned about a subject or an issue, a study may be initiated. The process starts with a motion at an association meeting to approve a study based on a request from a member, board, committee, allied agency or community group.

While there are many reasons to conduct a study, the chief purposes are to:

- Address a concern or need of the membership relating to education, health, safety, community problems, state or local legislation
- Collect information, data and facts to acquire a deeper understanding before acting on an issue that concerns the membership
- Develop information on a subject or issue that your PTA believes should be presented to the California State PTA Board of Managers, government agencies –school board, city council, board of supervisors – other groups or the general public
- Design a resolution for the California State PTA Convention

HOW TOS – CONDUCTING A STUDY

Appoint a study committee that is inclusive and reflects the diversity of your community. The committee oversees the study, researches and investigates the issue or concern and prepares reports on its findings with recommendations for next steps.

Consider bringing parents, students, teachers and administrators together with others from local business, civic, media and community organizations for the committee.

Study Committee – Quick Tips

- **Identify Subject** – Determine the chief focus of your study in terms of the subject and/or issue to be investigated
- **Set Goals** – Agree on the scope and purpose of your study by setting goals. For instance, will the committee gather information or develop recommendations for action? If 'information only', how will the information be used? How much information and time is needed to reach the goals and complete the study?
- **Maintain Minutes** – Keep minutes as a record of the committee's work. This ensures that all items in the study's plan of work are covered and provides information on the committee's activities for the final report.

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- **Research Subject or Issue** – When researching a subject or issue for a study, it is important to verify the accuracy of your sources and findings. Use resources such as community surveys, websites, videos, publications, agencies and experts in the field.

- **Delegate Tasks** – Assign responsibilities for research by giving each committee member a specific assignment. This will let you cover all aspects of the issue and ensure that personal views do not affect your findings. Share your research findings so that it is available to all members of the committee.

- **Assess Research –** In developing the committee's report, consider what possible solutions and conclusions can be drawn from your research before making any recommendations for action.

  Take time to test your assessment of the subject or issue in terms of how well it:

  - Aligns with the Purposes and basic policies of the PTA
  - Meets the committee's purpose, scope and goals
  - Offers practical solutions to be readily implemented with adequate resources
  - Matches the best interest and needs of the community

- **Prepare Study Report** – The final committee report, which is written, usually, by the committee's chairman, contains five, basic parts. It provides information on the study's purpose and scope, reference materials used, research findings, possible solutions and conclusions and recommendations for next steps.

NEXT STEPS FOR A STUDY

A final, committee report on the identified subject or issue is presented to your PTA board and general association for approval. As part of this process, determine what actions are required to implement the committee's recommendations and whether a more detailed action plan is needed to implement the proposed solutions.

Your study report, along with a cover letter, may also be referred and forwarded to:

- Another group for further study or action

- California State PTA through channels – unit to council (if in council) to district PTA – for further action or to share information to make your study available to other PTAs

For more ideas and information, contact your local council/ district PTA president.