



CALIFORNIA'S NEW APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING SCIENCE

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As school got underway this year, it's likely that science was on the minds of your school's teachers and principal. That's because the state is in the middle of a dramatic change in how science is taught, based on the Next Generation Science Standards or NGSS for short.

Here are quick answers to three frequently asked questions about California's new approach to teaching and learning science.

What's different in how children learn science under NGSS?

The basic idea is that students will learn about science and engineering by doing science and engineering. Instead of being told about the properties of matter, for example, students might use water and butter to investigate how heating and cooling affects each differently. Students observe real events in their everyday experience and then are taught how to use scientific methods to understand what is happening and why. This is called "phenomena-driven" learning.

Do teachers know how to teach this way?

Experts say that many teachers need to learn new strategies, especially in elementary schools. For one, the science standards and science classes are supposed to start in kindergarten. That's a big change for many teachers and the state is working to help teachers understand how to make that happen. One part of that is the use of a concept called "3-Dimensional Instruction"

Through 3-dimensional instruction, you may hear teachers talk about 1) science and engineering practices, 2) core disciplinary ideas, and 3) cross-cutting concepts. Underneath that jargon are some straightforward ideas (see section below).

How might this look in my child's classroom or school?

The California Department of Education has published some helpful parent guides to answer this question by grade level. These resources can be found at the bottom of the following page under RESOURCES: <https://capta.org/focus-areas/education/curriculum/next-gen-science/>



THE 3 DIMENSIONS OF NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE

Science and engineering practices = what scientists and engineers do. For example, asking questions, planning investigations, analyzing data, and providing explanations. For a kindergartener this might be asking about seemingly simple experiences, like why some days they need a jacket on the playground and some days they don't.

Core disciplinary ideas = what scientists and engineers know. The ideas are organized into three main categories: physical science, life science, and earth and space science. Under each, topics are introduced in the early grades and then expanded and deepened as kids get older.

Cross-cutting concepts = the ways that scientists and engineers think and link knowledge together. For example, they look for patterns. In the classroom you can expect students to measure things, look at how whole systems work, and identify what is stable and what is changing.

LAST CALL FOR SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

The deadline to apply for California State PTA continuing education scholarships and grants is fast approaching!

Continuing Education Scholarships:

To help you continue on your educational path, California State PTA is proud to offer several continuing education scholarship programs for school professionals and volunteers. We have three opportunities available for nurses, teachers and counselors, and PTA volunteers.

All continuing education scholarship applications are due October 15, 2019. Follow this [link](#) to apply online or download an application to submit by mail or email.

Grants:

California State PTA grant funds are available for PTAs in good standing to develop and implement programs and projects at the unit, council and district PTA levels. We offer the following grants: cultural arts, outreach translation, healthy lifestyles and parent education.

To get more information on the grants or download the application, click [here](#).

Applications are due October 15, 2019 and must be mailed or emailed; faxes will not be accepted.



WHAT ARE RESOLUTIONS?

We've all been there – there's a local issue or concern and we know it's something that happens throughout the state. As the nation's largest volunteer-led child-advocacy association working to drive improvements in the education, health, and well-being of all children and families, our members are quick to identify problems or situations with state (or nationwide) implications.

But we don't know how to bring the PTA's attention to the issue or make a statewide change.

Good news, local issues can become California State PTA resolutions. A resolution is one way to bring attention to the issue and authorize PTA action. These resolutions offer official guidance on wide-ranging issues, including in just the past few years, dyslexia, school-finance, health & safety, and early care & education, (see the full list of existing CAPTA Resolutions www.capta.org/focus-areas/advocacy/resolutions/)

Every year resolutions are presented for consideration and adoption by our membership at our annual California State PTA convention. The deadline to submit the first draft of a resolution for the 2020 CAPTA Convention is November 1, 2019. The State's Resolution Committee is available to answer questions and provide mentoring support in advance of the draft deadline.

TAKE ACTION

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