

# PTA<sup>®</sup> in California

*everychild. onevoice.*



**Back To  
School!**

**California State**  
**PTA<sup>®</sup>**  
*everychild. onevoice.*

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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER  
OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE PTA

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## DIVERSITY *and* INCLUSION MATTER

*PTA is an inclusive organization.* You want to make sure that everyone on your campus can participate in your events, but often times certain groups are forgotten during your event planning. Some attributes of individuals with disabilities are obvious, like a wheelchair or crutches. Others have “hidden” attributes: individuals with mental health concerns, autism, cognitive and learning disabilities. As you begin to plan your activities this year, here are some things to keep in mind so that you are fully inclusive:

- **Are we being culturally inclusive?** Think about food, music, entertainment— are all cultures on your campus included?
- **Are we linguistically inclusive?** Are you translating your advertising, the posters that point the way to various activities, and do you have native speakers on hand to help make everyone feel welcome?
- **Are we being accessible to those with mobility needs?** Is your event held on a grass field that limits

participation or upstairs in a building without an elevator or easy ramp access?

- **Did we provide areas/activities to include those with sensory issues (noise, light, touch)?** Is it possible to open the activity early without loud music or large crowds to accommodate students or families with sensory issues?

### CALIFORNIA STATE PTA WELCOMES ALL!

*We Welcome:*

- \* All Races and Ethnicities
- \* All Religions and Creeds
- \* All Gender Identities
- \* All Countries of Origin
- \* All Sexual Orientations
- \* All Immigrants and Refugees
- \* All Abilities and Disabilities
- \* All Spoken and Signed Languages
- \* All Ages

*Everyone!*

[www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org)

## A Message From



California State PTA President

**CELIA JAFFE**

### *Engaging Families for a Full Curriculum for All Kids*

Can you imagine being asked as you sent your child to kindergarten, “Which subjects should we leave out of the education of this child? Decide right now, shall we leave out instruction in science? The arts? Physical education? Health? Which gaps in knowledge are acceptable for this child’s development and future?” These questions seem ridiculous, and yet many students do not receive full instruction in all areas.

Asking questions of your principal or school board about how subjects like science and art are delivered to all students is a good place to start. Look throughout this *PTA in California* edition for more information and ideas on these topics.

Your PTA can support full curriculum goals by hosting family nights for hands-on science and/or arts activities. Many parents feel ill equipped to support their children with homework and are uncomfortable at school. Coming together with other families at an informal, PTA-hosted event can smooth the way for adults to connect to their child’s school and to feel part of the community. Families enjoy activities that call for creativity, teamwork, and trial and error, which are great skills for school and for life.

Parents and caregivers will learn that merely being interested in the child’s school day, encouraging the child to make a good effort at homework and promoting good eating and sleeping habits can go a long way toward their child’s success. Simple programs and opportunities for families to connect with the school can make a big difference.

All children deserve a bright future, and together, the efforts of PTAs like yours throughout the state and nation are enhancing that future. *Thank you for all you do.*

Celia Jaffe

California State PTA President

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## A Message From



Executive Director

**SHERRY SKELLY GRIFFITH**

### *The Importance of a Full Curriculum*

As we begin a new school year, it is a great time for you as a PTA leader, member, parent or family to learn whether your school and school district offers a full curriculum for every student. The California State PTA has a long tradition of advancing the rights of every child to be provided a full and enriching curriculum that values all the content subjects so that every student graduates with a quality education.

Unfortunately, the arts and sciences are not always fully available to all students. Did you know that 88 percent of California schools aren’t fully teaching the arts? Yet 1 out of 10 jobs in California are in a creative industry and students exposed to the arts are five times less likely to drop out of school. We want to change the status quo so we have embarked upon a statewide campaign with other organizations called The Public Will Campaign for the Arts to advance the rights of students to have access to arts learning programs in every school, district, and community. Please go to [www.createca.org](http://www.createca.org) to sign up for the campaign.

We are also very focused on bringing greater awareness to families about the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). We look forward to providing resources to you and your schools this school year. Of course there are costs involved in offering a full curriculum, so we are committed to ensuring that during the upcoming 2020 election we will support initiatives that move us closer to our goal of full and fair funding for public education. I hope you find this *PTA in California* valuable as you advance the needs of your child and all the children in your school and school district.

Sherry Skelly Griffith

California State PTA Executive Director

# STEAM Learning *at Your School*

*This year at the California State PTA Convention in Monterey, we were able to provide hands-on science projects and experiences that incorporate the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). This was a model of an activity that you could bring back to your school to increase family engagement around the new science standards.*

*We had multiple stations around the room:*

- Hands-on activities facilitated by volunteers
- Short, 15-minute presentations by experts on science topics
- Local vendors and experts with tables to share their products
- Short science videos on a loop that were designed to inspire people to do more science once they got home

Our team found amazing and easy-to-do experiments online. We called vendors, museums and businesses in the local area to see if they would donate their time to either present during the talks or host a table. You could also contact a local college or ask parents who work in the sciences to help at the event. We wanted everything to be hands-on and interactive, so we included things like the paper airplane toss which also doubled as our registration table (the participants put their name and information on the plane before they tried to get it into the basket!).

We hope that you will try your own version of STEAM Extreme. If you do, please share how it went at [www.bit.ly/PTAstory](http://www.bit.ly/PTAstory).



# SCIENCE *leads to* SUCCESS

*In our increasingly technological world, a strong science education is essential in order for our kids to be ready for college and for a 21st century career.* To be successful, children need to be able to think critically about issues they encounter, analyze information they receive and solve problems effectively.

Science class is one place they can build those abilities. What they learn in science will be central to how they understand and make sense of the world around them.

California schools have risen to this challenge, thanks to the state’s adoption and implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The standards call on schools to introduce science to students beginning in kindergarten in order to fuel kids’ innate curiosity and ignite a lifelong interest in science and engineering. That’s especially important for students who don’t think of themselves as “science kids.”

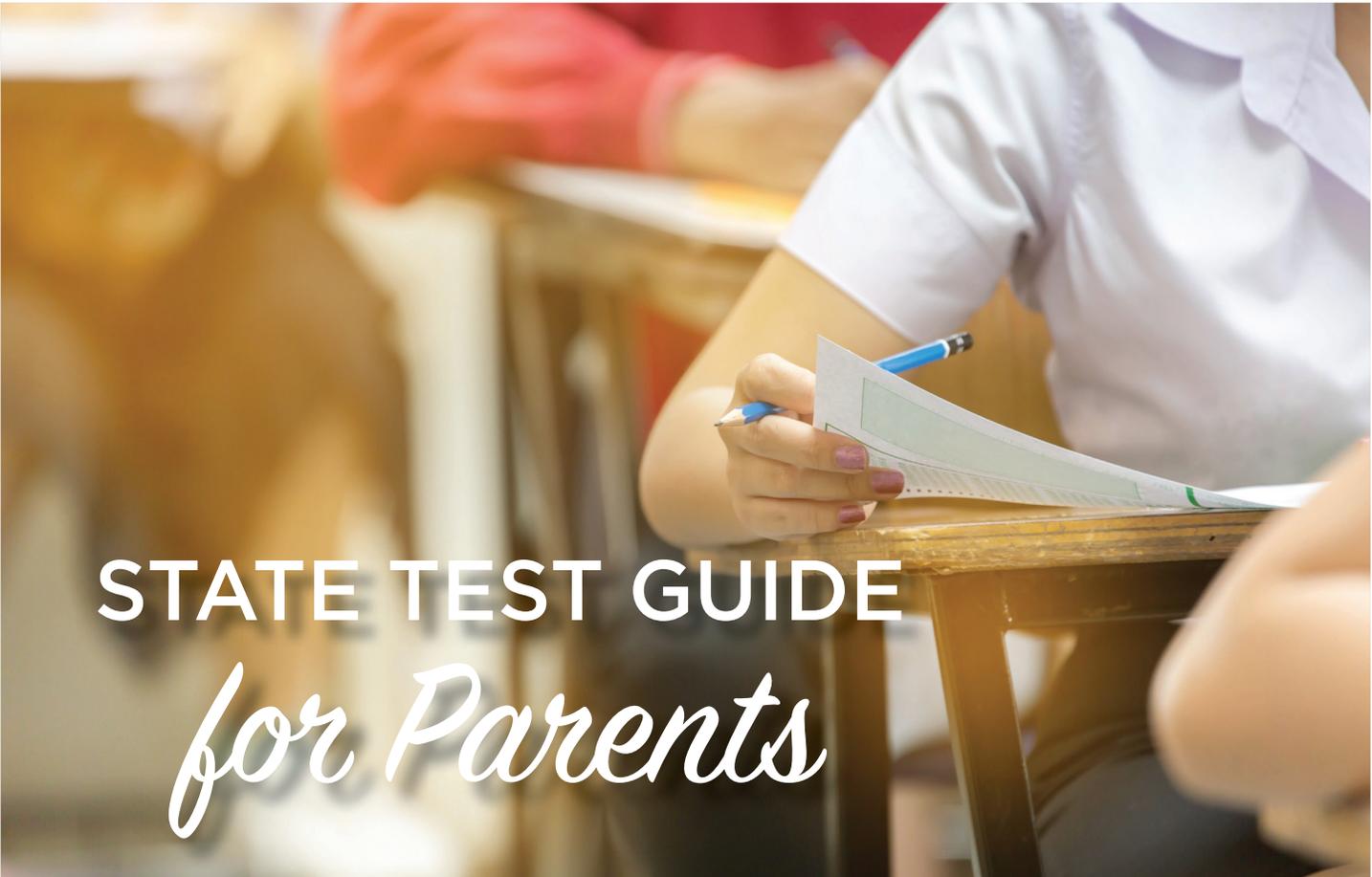
*When educators talk about NGSS they may mention “three dimensional learning.”*

*Those three dimensions include:*

- Disciplinary Core Ideas that are organized into four domains: 1) physical sciences, 2) life sciences, 3) earth and space sciences, and 4) engineering, technology and the applications of science
- Practices describe the things scientists do in order to investigate and develop theories about the natural world and the things engineers do as they design and build models and systems
- Crosscutting Concepts are a means of creating understanding that applies across all the domains of science, and which are taught explicitly to students

Last spring, students in 5th, 8th, and one high school grade took the first full administration of the new California Science Test (CAST). The results will be incorporated into the state’s school accountability system, so look for them on your child’s testing report.





# STATE TEST GUIDE *for Parents*

*Over the course of a school year, you receive lots of information on how your child is performing in school.*

Taken together, teacher-assigned grades on tests and report cards can give you a good idea of your child's academic progress.

For some additional perspective however, make sure to pay attention to the results of several state tests. You can use them to better understand your child's strengths and see how they compare to other students in California.

The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) includes tests in English language arts/literacy and mathematics that students take in grades 3-8 and in grade 11. This year the state is also testing students in science in grades 5, 8 and a locally-decided year of high school.

In the past, you would receive the state test results for your child via a printed student score report mailed from your school. This year, the CAASPP is going electronic, enabling school districts to deliver the score reports to you faster and in a more informative, convenient way. In most cases, that will be through your local "parent portal." You should receive a notice from your school or district about how to access the report. If you prefer a printed report, just let your school know that. They are obligated to provide one if you ask.

Every student has academic strengths as well as areas where they need to improve. State tests your child takes are just one measure of how they're doing, but they're important because they measure the most important skills in each subject.

If you want to know more about the CAASPP, including what types of questions are on the tests, visit [www.ca.startingsmarter.org](http://www.ca.startingsmarter.org). The sample test questions are broken down by subject area, grade level and performance area. The Starting Smarter website also has free, printable documents that explain the student score reports and offer tips on discussing your student's test results with their teacher.

Below are easy to read and understand resources in English and Spanish for parents to understand the testing and how best to support your student.

- [www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/documents/startsmartparentflyer.pdf](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/documents/startsmartparentflyer.pdf)
- [www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/documents/startsmartparentspa.pdf](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/documents/startsmartparentspa.pdf)



As you are about to embark on a new school year ask yourself, “What is family engagement?” According to the California Department of Education, family engagement is “communicating and doing things with your student, your student’s teacher, or your student’s school to support your student’s learning and success. Parents, family members, and other caregivers can be involved in a student’s education in many ways.” Decades of research demonstrates that when families, students, schools and communities work together as a team, we better prepare students for a happy, healthy and successful future.

#### *What are some ways you can engage the parents at your school site?*

1. *Welcome all families into the school community.* Start the new school year by welcoming family members to join PTA, school site council or volunteer in the classroom. Have a survey they can fill out right away that gives them the chance to indicate the ways in which they would like to be involved.
2. *Encourage strong communication between families and teachers, creating a positive environment for student success.* Parents can make a difference by staying up-to-date on classroom and school news, attending school events whenever possible and addressing concerns or questions honestly, openly and early on. PTA can help parents understand how to contact their child’s teacher and get into contact with the school. If there is an online portal for parent information, PTA can train them in ways to best use it.
3. *Host parent education nights about student study skills, curriculum and student engagement.* Also, give parents tip sheets on parent-teacher conferences and homework help. Empower families to be advocates for all children to ensure students have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.
4. *Encourage the administration* to hold coffee conversations at the school site so that families can ask questions and give meaningful input.
5. *Contact your school site and see if they offer the California State PTA School Smarts Parent Engagement Program*, which offers family-friendly training with an arts component on California’s education system and how parents can be effective advocates for their children and schools. Parents can give input and become involved in the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). Learn more at [www.capta.org/school-smarts](http://www.capta.org/school-smarts).
6. *Host a community resource fair to support cultural, recreational and academic needs of families.* You can use our STEAM Extreme model (on page 4) to help you get started.

These are just a few ideas and thoughts on how greater family engagement could impact your school site.

# Everything You Need to Know About Membership

Welcome to the 2019-2020 PTA membership year. We hope that each of you had an amazing summer, an opportunity to recharge your batteries and we hope that you have taken time to start planning your membership campaigns for the upcoming school year.

Your California State PTA Membership Team will be working throughout the summer to come up with contests and incentives that we hope will get you excited for the work ahead. In the meantime, you can read the *Membership Monday* emails at [www.capta.org/Membership-Monday](http://www.capta.org/Membership-Monday), visit our Member Perks page at [www.capta.org/member-perks](http://www.capta.org/member-perks) or plan your marketing campaign with tools at [www.capta.org/building-membership](http://www.capta.org/building-membership).

We are also working on our membership theme and goal for the upcoming year, and hopefully you have had an opportunity to do the same for your units, councils and districts. More information on our goal, theme, contests, and incentives along with additional helpful information can be found at [www.capta.org/building-membership](http://www.capta.org/building-membership).

For those of you that are currently using our electronic membership system powered by TOTEM, you will be pleased to know that TOTEM has added more enhancements this year based on feedback from our PTA leaders including the following:

## NEW FEATURES OF THE ELECTRONIC MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM

- Message Center allows your association to send email broadcasts to all your members
- Members can associate multiple students with their membership, along with grade and teacher information to make class-level membership drives easier to track
- The new Student Roster Report consolidates details for student members and non-members.
- You can configure multiple membership price levels (by member type) and multiple suggested donations to increase membership and revenue
- Set a membership goal from the TOTEM Dashboard and share your membership progress with the membership charts

If your PTA would like more information on how to get started using our electronic membership system you can find it at [www.bit.ly/pta-quick-start](http://www.bit.ly/pta-quick-start).

We are here to help you have an incredible membership campaign and we would love to hear from you. Please share your thoughts, questions and ideas with us at: [membership@capta.org](mailto:membership@capta.org).



# Importance of Physical Activity in *Children & Youth*

California mandates at least 200 minutes of physical education every 10 school days in grades 1-6, as well as at least 400 minutes every 10 school days of physical education in grades 7-8 and for all four years of high school, in recognition of the importance of physical activity for kids. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans takes it a step further, suggesting that children and youth ages 6-17 years participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Here are some suggestions to help you bridge the gap and increase your child's physical activity:

- **Aerobic Activity**— Moderate-to-vigorous aerobic physical activity that makes children breathe hard and sweat at least three times a week, but preferably every day. Activities could include hiking, biking, walking, martial arts or playing a sport with sustained physical activity like soccer or basketball.
- **Muscle-Strengthening Activity**— This helps children build strength and can include lifting weights, climbing trees, or playing on playground equipment. It should be done at least three days a week.
- **Bone-Strengthening Activity**— At least three times a week, youth should participate in activities designed to keep their bones healthy and strong. Running, skipping, jumping rope, gymnastics or tennis are all superior activities to strengthen bones.

## 60 MINUTES of Physical Activity Every Day of the Week



# How to Use LCAP *in your* School Community

*The Local Control Accountability Plan is intended to be a comprehensive planning tool to help all students succeed.*

Parents and community members should attend LCAP meetings to give the school and district input on things they feel need improvement or give them kudos for things that they do well.

LCAP meetings go all through the year, as you can see in our Seasons of LCAP flier but there are some specific questions to ask as the year begins:

- Where can I find my school district's LCAP?
- How, when and where can I give input on our LCAP?
- What are our school and school district doing to engage all parents in the process of developing and reviewing our LCAP?
- How can parents, staff and community partners work together to support student success at home and at school?
- What are we doing to ensure that all students are motivated to come to school?
- Do all of our students have textbooks and materials that are up-to-date? Are school facilities safe? Are we providing instruction by credentialed teachers in all subject areas?
- What are we doing to prepare and train our staff on the state standards and assessments?
- How is our school district improving or increasing services for low-income students, English learners and foster youth?
- Do all of our students have access to a complete education that includes the arts, physical education, hands-on science and other required courses?
- In what ways does school climate impact student achievement? What is being done to improve school climate so all students have a positive school experience?
- In what different ways is our district measuring student achievement?
- How are we increasing our graduation rates and reducing the number of drop outs?

## CREATIVITY IS NOT OPTIONAL

**Creativity is vital to our children's future!** As parents, we see the value the arts have in our child's life. We know that the arts need to be a part of the comprehensive curriculum our children receive during their public school education. As the school year begins, keep these facts in mind:

1. The arts standards adopted by the state in January now include five domains—visual arts, music, dance, theatre, and media arts.
2. Arts education is included in the Education Code for both elementary and secondary students (sections **51210** and **51220**)
3. Only 12% of schools are at the level of quality arts instruction mandated by the state of California
4. You can see the standards that your child should be learning in each grade by looking at the **Parent's Guide to the Visual and Performing Arts in California Public Schools** - [www.capta.org/arts-education](http://www.capta.org/arts-education).
5. There is a massive public will campaign across the state to bring the importance of arts education to the forefront. You can become a part of it by joining Create CA at [www.createca.org](http://www.createca.org).
6. Continue to talk about the importance of arts education to your school site council, school principal, and at your site or district LCAP (Local Control Accountability Plan) meetings

Learn more at [www.capta.org/arts-education](http://www.capta.org/arts-education)

CREATE CA

## Education Resources for Parents

Available on [capta.org](http://www.capta.org) in multiple languages

[www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org)

### HOMework

The purpose of homework is to check for understanding, provide review, and teach responsibility.

Educators believe that students in grades K-2 should not exceed 20 minutes each school day on homework, while older children in grades 3-6 can handle 30-60 minutes a day. For kids in middle and high school, two hours of homework may be assigned.

Your district should have a policy for how much time each night your student will spend on homework.

#### *A few best practices for homework:*

- Find a balance of homework time and after-school activities, and schedule in time for your child to complete their homework
- Think about your child's learning styles and have their homework station in a place that aligns with that—some students work best in silence, while others need a more active space
- Encourage your child's organizational skills by getting them a calendar to write down their assignments
- Participate in back-to-school night, parent-teacher conferences and open house; and read all communications coming from school

[www.capta.org/resource/homework-help](http://www.capta.org/resource/homework-help)

### PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCE TIPS

It is critically important for parents to attend their parent teacher conference or goal-setting meetings. It is the first time that you will have one-on-one time with your child's teacher to discuss goals, challenges, and help them get to know your child.

#### *Here are some tips to maximize your conference time:*

1. Be on time and ready with a list of any questions you may have
2. Talk to your child to see if they have any questions, concerns or particular goals they would like to focus on
3. Ask what you can do at home to support the learning that is happening in the classroom—many teachers have great ideas for you

[www.capta.org/tips-for-parents](http://www.capta.org/tips-for-parents)

### WHAT WILL YOUR CHILD LEARN THIS YEAR?

Information about California learning standards for math and English are summarized by grade level in *The Parents' Guide to Student Success* for each grade K-8, plus one for high school math and high school English.

[www.capta.org/education/common-core](http://www.capta.org/education/common-core)

Articles appearing in this newsletter may be reprinted in PTA unit, council and district newsletters. Please credit California State PTA.

### PTA IN CALIFORNIA

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**The mission of the California State PTA is to positively impact the lives of all children and families.**

Adopted August 2013

# California State PTA®

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## Start the school year... **READY!**

- Meeting Signs & Banners
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- Attendance Sign-In Pads
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- Robert's Rules Guides
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- Bank Bags
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Parents are **30%** more likely to get involved after graduating from *California State PTA's School Smarts Parent Engagement Program.*

Learn more at

[www.capta.org/school-smarts](http://www.capta.org/school-smarts)



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