

# PTA<sup>®</sup> *in California*

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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE PTA

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WINTER/SPRING EDITION 2021

**Celebrating  
124 Years  
of PTA**

**California State**  
**PTA<sup>®</sup>**  
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**10 PTA  
New Year's  
Resolutions**

**PTA's Advocacy  
Agenda for  
Equity**

*Advocacy then  
and now!*



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Helping Kids Understand the Riots at the Capitol | Honorary Service Awards

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## A Message From the President

**CELIA JAFFE**

President, California State PTA

### PTA Partnerships are Crucial during COVID-19

Never has it been more evident that schools and families must cooperate in the education of children than during this pandemic. Distance learning requires parents and caregivers to devote part of the home to be a learning space, to be aware of timing of student's online sessions, and at the same time to fulfill their adult responsibilities. The stakes are high and it is a stressful time for all.

Schools with effective PTAs had strong relationships between students, families, and communities before this crisis, and these links have been crucial during the challenges of COVID-19. Regular lines of communication, both formal and informal, are even more vital when staff, students, and families are not occupying the same space. Schools that are linked to the community through PTA know their families and can help connect resources, educational and otherwise, with students and families in need.

PTA provides a comfortable setting for family members, students, and staff to meet and talk on equal footing—even when those conversations are online or by phone. PTA complements the official structures built into the California public education system, such as LCAP (Local Control and Accountability Plan) Committee, ELAC (English Language Advisory Committee), School Site Council, and so on. In this time of isolation, simply holding conversations among parents and families is a value to the community.

PTA's purposes have always included bringing home and school closer together and advocating for the education and wellbeing of all children. When schools and families act as partners, communicate effectively, and share decision-making, students succeed. If you want to gauge how well your school and PTA team up with families, take a look at the [PTA guide on family-school partnerships](#).

This year is anything but ordinary. The relationship between families and schools, enhanced by the role of PTA in your community, is incredibly important. Thank you for making a difference.

President, California State PTA





## A Message From *the Executive Director*

**SHERRY SKELLY GRIFFITH**

Executive Director, California State PTA

We have been working for children and families since 1897. At that time the United States was feeling the enormous impact of the Industrial Revolution. Children were working in factories and mines. Many children could not attend school or obtain enough food to eat and many were malnourished. Fast forward to 2021. Our children and families have been rocked by the impact of a global pandemic, the physical closure of schools, learning loss and threats to our children's health and well-being.

CA State PTA is still working 124 years later to address the health, welfare, safety and education of every child in our great state. We quickly pivoted our attention to the new normal of distance learning and now to the ongoing discussions about the safe reopening of schools. We are representing you, our members, at every level of policymaking including a voice on the State Board of Education's Distance Learning Advisory Committee, the Governor's Vaccine Advisory Committee and the Education Coalition discussing the Governor's proposed Safe School Reopening Program. We are advancing equity at every turn including our role on the state California Equity Leaders Alliance.

This has been a challenging time. Connection matters and even though we may not be physically present on all campuses at this time, the California State PTA and your local PTA is still working on your behalf. Take advantage of our numerous resources from Member Perks to the Resource Library and our COVID-19 web resources at [capta.org](http://capta.org). Stay healthy.

Executive Director, California State PTA

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

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

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



# 124 Years of PTA *Membership*

PTA was started in 1897 as a group of parents, teachers, and community members in Washington, D.C. focused on issues that impacted children and families. Issues that PTA has advocated for over the last 124 years include child labor laws, universal kindergarten, and the national school lunch program, just to name a few.

These days, our PTAs are still working hard for our schools and communities. Many of our PTAs have gone virtual with programs and resources to keep their families engaged. Some examples of virtual PTA events include: a virtual book fair, science night, talent show, arts event, or family game night. Our PTAs also remain a connection between schools and families during these challenging times.

Through the years, PTAs have also been called upon to be the voice for our families and communities, and that is as true today as any other time during these last 124 years. Our PTAs have hosted listening sessions and Zoom meetings that have included principals, superintendents, school

board members, and elected officials to keep our families informed on the latest happenings in their school district.

All of the good work that PTA has done throughout the years is made possible by our PTA members. Thank you to our volunteers that have helped us continue our 124-year legacy. None of this would be possible without the support from our PTA members and leaders, and your efforts are very much appreciated.

As we continue advocating for all children and families, it has never been more important to have a strong membership. If you have not joined a local PTA, or if you're looking for another PTA to support, please click this link for an easy way to help us continue our efforts for another 124 years: [Find Your Local PTA](#).

If you have questions about PTA membership, or other ways that you can be involved, please don't hesitate to contact us at [membership@capta.org](mailto:membership@capta.org).



# 10 PTA NEW YEAR'S Resolutions

The New Year is a great time to take stock of what you have accomplished and set new goals for the year. And it is clear this year is different! Each January, about one in three Americans resolve to better themselves in some way. We do this as individuals; why not for our PTA? It's a new year—a fresh start and a chance to do great things for children and families.

**Here are 10 PTA New Year's resolutions to consider:**

**1. Resolve to move toward your PTA goals:**

- Start now—If you haven't started yet, don't beat yourself up—start now. If you haven't started a membership campaign. Start now. If you haven't decided on programs or a budget. Start now. It's been a strange year, but let's not give up there is a lot we can still do. Don't worry about what you haven't done. Start now.
- Evaluate and redirect if needed. Hold a mid-term board evaluation—take some time to evaluate your PTA goals, activities and budget. There may be some different things your PTA can do this year. Are you holding virtual events? Working with the Principal to make sure students are learning, safe and healthy to the best of our ability. Things are different. Maybe there are new opportunities.

**2. Resolve to ask for help, if you need it:** There is nothing wrong with asking for help, and this is the perfect time to reach out to your council or district for support. Your district and council PTA leaders volunteer because they want to help, and they would rather help when you ask early while there is still time. Problems tend to get bigger when we ignore them, but can often be resolved quickly when we get some help. We at California State PTA are here for you too and we have resources and training that we love to share. If you have a question or concern—let us know. We are here for you.

**3. Resolve to share the fun:** Teamwork is one of the great benefits of PTA. Look around to see if there are more people you through can include on your committees, invite to activities or ask to volunteer. Let more people enjoy the privilege of contributing. Especially in these times when we aren't running into to each other at school or the part or grocery store, we might need to put some effort into building those connections.

**4. Resolve to share your successes:** If things are going well, let us know! Share your stories with California State PTA, your district and your council. Share your accomplishments with your fellow PTA leaders. We are all figuring out new ways to do things—share what you have learned and let's all get through this together. Let's all support each other. It's fun to celebrate the great work you are doing, and it helps give other PTAs ideas and inspiration!

**5. Resolve to grow your PTA:** Remember membership is a year-round activity. Think about who you haven't asked to join your PTA. Are there new families who have moved into your community or folks you forgot to ask to join? Have all your school-board members joined? Are there a few teachers you can remind? Remember, not every member needs to volunteer. The more members we have, the stronger our voice as we advocate for all children. Make sure you are on TOTEM and share the link and QR code on all your materials.

**6. Resolve to try something new:** A virtual town hall, a zoom talent show, virtual coffee with the Principal. If your PTA wants to try something new: a new program for the students, a great family engagement activity or a new twist on a tried- and-true program.

**7. Resolve to leave a legacy:** PTA's legacy is long and substantial because we share our vision. Plan to attend the California State PTA Annual Convention this May. The convention offers great workshops, resources, exhibits, networking opportunities and more. You can participate in the decisions of California State PTA. Build your PTA knowledge and that of your friends and colleagues. It takes all of us.

**8. Resolve to learn more:** California State PTA has many resources for you. To learn about PTA, schools, school districts, how schools work and how you can best advocate for your child and all children. Check out our resource library, School Smarts Parent Engagement Program, or new resources around membership, programs, and more.

**9. Resolve to celebrate:** You work hard at the most important job there is—raising the next generation. Having a positive impact on your children and families is worth celebrating. Thank you. We all appreciate all you do!

**10. Resolve to stay on track for the next school year:** Part of our sustainability is thinking of next year. To keep your PTA healthy, check your bylaws and calendar to ensure you are meeting your target dates for your election meeting in the spring. If you have elected your nominating committee and they are working on nominations for next year's board, you should be in good shape. If you haven't, now is a great time to start working on that.

If you haven't done everything perfectly up until now, you're just like the rest of us (not perfect). Don't beat yourself up about what you should have done—just start fresh and do better from now on. That's the great thing about a new year. It's a fresh start! **Celebrate and thank you!**



# ★ ★ ★ HONORARY ★ ★ ★ SERVICE AWARDS

Founders' Day is the perfect time to give recognition to those volunteers, school staff, and community members who have supported your PTA this year. Honorary Service Awards are a unique way for PTA units, councils and districts to publicly acknowledge both individuals and organizations for outstanding community service to children and youth in a community. All funds collected with this program are used exclusively to support the California State PTA scholarship and grant programs.

## THERE ARE SIX DISTINCTIVE TYPES OF HONORARY SERVICE AWARDS:

### Very Special Person Award (VSP)

This award is given to recognize an individual or organization for their service to PTA.



### Honorary Service Award (HSA)

This award is given to recognize an individual or organization for outstanding service to children and youth in your community, going above and beyond what is asked of them.



### Continuing Service Award (CSA)

This award is given to recognize an individual or organization for ongoing or long-time service to children and youth, providing support year after year.



### Outstanding Teacher Award (OTA)

This award may be given to recognize a teacher for outstanding service to children and youth through PTA, school, or community.



### Outstanding Administrator Award (OAA)

This award may be given to recognize an administrator for outstanding service to children and youth through PTA, school, or the community.



### Golden Oak Service Award (GOSA)

This award is given to recognize, as the most prestigious of the Honorary Service Awards, an individual or organization that has made significant contributions to the welfare of children and youth in a school or community.



For more information about Honorary Service Awards, [click here](#).

# MEMBER *Spotlight*

Do you know of  
someone you think  
we should

**spotlight**

in our next issue?  
Email us at

**membership@  
capta.org!**



## **Launa Bogartz**

President, Mayall PTA

President, Valley Academy of Arts and Sciences PTSA

Treasurer, Los Amigos Council

**California State PTA:** What is your PTA resolution/ what do you hope PTA does in the coming year?

**Launa:** My PTA units are working to provide information and resources so that our students and their families feel safe and knowledgeable during this time of virtual learning and uncertainty. We also hope to facilitate the distribution of valuable supplies for learning and self-care to our families and school staff in a safe manner.

**California State PTA:** How can PTA be more inclusive to all?

**Launa:** It's always helpful when the executive board has access to family data so we can better assist with needs. We also use staff information and wish lists to be able to encourage families to support and equip our teachers with the supplies they need to help students.



# 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 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.

## CALIFORNIA STATE PTA ADVOCACY AGENDA FOR EQUITY

**Poverty, Income and racial inequality:** Legislation to address 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

our students, including before and after school programs, summer school and distance 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:** Recruit and develop an educator workforce that is representative of, and can connect to, the student community.





# — CALIFORNIA STATE PTA — SAFE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

**California State PTA** is advocating for all children and families especially during these challenging times. Since March 2020, when schools first closed in-person instruction, PTA volunteers worked with other groups to ensure all students have meals through school meal programs, we've advocated for laptops and devices for students and internet services, and we continue to work with our local and state leaders to secure more funding for schools in our state budget. Our focus is always health, safety and education of all children. Let there be no mistake, PTA wants schools to open safely as soon as possible. Since we represent a diverse state, we know there is no one solution, so we offer reopening principles to be used to guide the work at the local level. California State PTA leaders have been representing children and families in many statewide groups and policy discussions throughout the pandemic. Our collective voice is represented in the Safe Reopening Principles, the Community Vaccine Advisory Committee, the Distance Learning Advisory Committee, and we have been in many other conversations through the Education Coalition. Please consider these reopening principles based on PTA authorities as we move forward to opening our schools throughout California taking into consideration local input.



- 1. Coordinate Efforts** The Legislature and the Governor must agree on a coordinated approach to reopening schools as quickly as safely possible.
- 2. Equitable Sufficient Funding** There must be sufficient funding to cover the additional costs related to opening schools in person. And it must be equitable. All students should generate the same base funding grant with an LCFF adjustment that recognizes the impacts of the pandemic on disadvantaged students. Opening schools will require social emotional support for students and staff, and services to meet students' and families' needs including safe transportation for students.
- 3. Extra Funding for Health-Related Costs** Funding to pay for testing, vaccines, contact tracing, and other COVID-related health costs should not be from Proposition 98 funds. Every Proposition 98 dollar spent on non-instructional costs is one less dollar to educate our children.
- 4. Protect the Health and Wellbeing of Students, Staff and Families** The Governor, the Legislature and local governments must prioritize vaccinations for school staff, early childhood educators and childcare staff, especially those who are already working in-person.
- 5. Parent Communication and Input** School districts must provide opportunities for robust input and feedback as they prepare and execute reopening plans. They must ensure parents representing the diversity of the community are included in decision-making.
- 6. In-Person Attendance** Parents and families should be able to choose whether a child returns to school in-person depending on the health of the child and their family situation.
- 7. Mental Health Matters** Support the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff by providing adequate resources to support their individual needs. To protect student health and well-being, middle schools should not start before 8:00 am and high schools before 8:30 am.
- 8. Expanded Learning and Learning Loss** Afterschool, summer school and childcare programs need to be available, fully funded and coordinated with the school day. All schools should develop programs to address learning loss and meet the needs of the whole child.
- 9. Follow Health Guidelines** Schools should not open in person unless it is safe for students and staff. School districts should adhere to the requirements set forth by the California Department of Public Health and county health departments regarding the reopening of schools.
- 10. Realistic Timeline** Any timeline for the reopening of schools should consider the needs of parents and teachers and respect the most accurate health guidelines. This includes making sure the school facility is safe for re-opening.

*The New*

# PARENTS' GUIDE TO ARTS EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Arts Education Committee and Create CA are excited to announce the release of the newly revised *Parents' Guide to Arts Education in California Public Schools*.

This guide has been updated to reflect the new standards for instruction related to the arts, as well as the new discipline of Media Arts. It explains the arts standards for each grade level – from kindergarten through twelfth grade – with examples of what should be happening in the classroom, and what each student should be able to accomplish and remember. It also includes talking points to help parents advocate for their child and address the arts curriculum with teachers and

administrators, as well as ideas and suggestions on what can be done in the home, in the classroom and in the community to advocate for more arts education.

We all know that the arts are a vital part of a well-rounded education, with benefits that help students succeed in all areas. Be sure to get your copy of this newly revised guide and be the arts advocate all students need.

This guide is available online at the following link, and in print: <https://capta.org/focus-areas/education/arts-education/parents-guide-to-the-visual-and-performing-arts/>





# HELPING KIDS UNDERSTAND THE RIOTS AT THE CAPITOL

*Excerpted from [Child Mind Institute](#)  
in response to the recent events in Washington D.C.*

No matter their age, it's important to talk with your children about how the events in Washington D.C. fit into bigger issues of justice, democracy, racism and white supremacy. Take the opportunity to have an honest discussion about racism, that these two groups were not treated equally, and to know that this is an ongoing discussion. This has been happening for longer than just yesterday or the past four years – there is a history and we can talk about that.



## TALKING WITH YOUNGER KIDS

Younger kids are unlikely to understand what's happening on TV, but they may still notice that something is up.

- Check in with little kids. It's important that parents take the opportunity to talk about what is happening and not shy away from the topic.
- Remember, kids are listening even when you're not talking to them directly. If you need to vent your frustrations or other feelings, do it when the kids are in bed.
- Use developmentally appropriate language to answer little kids' questions.
- Reassure kids who may have seen disturbing images of violence on TV that they're safe.
- Emphasize the positive. Going back into the Capitol Building our representatives were showing how important our elections are.

## TALKING WITH SCHOOL-AGE KIDS

Older kids may have some understanding of what's going on and feel anxious or scared. Modeling a calm, rational response and helping them talk through any fears or worries they have can help.

- Give kids a chance to tell you what they saw and ask questions. It's important to get a sense of what they're thinking and what they already know about what's going on. This also gives you a chance to correct any misinformation they may have heard.
- Validate their feelings
- Emphasize that what the rioters did was not effective, and that there are laws in place to ensure that there are consequences for what they did.
- Help kids avoid black-and-white thinking. Keep your talks with them about the action; do not label the people
- Keep routines in place and try doing something as a family like taking a walk, baking a cake, or making art. Anything that helps keep everyone calm and distracted.

## TALKING TO TEENAGERS

For teenagers and young adults, using this as an opportunity to talk about their own rights and responsibilities can be helpful.

- Let them know that it's normal to be angry, sad or frightened when witnessing injustice. Especially for teens who were involved in the Black Lives Matter protests, seeing this situation unfold may be very upsetting.
- Discuss appropriate ways for teens to channel their emotions and fight for what they believe in, no matter their politics.
- Use this as an opportunity to discuss how kids are getting – and vetting – the information they see online and on TV.
- Open a conversation about what they can learn from these events and from the president's actions. Encourage them to talk about what makes a good leader, what are qualities and values we would want in a leader and what a good leader would do in this situation.

To read this article on the Child Mind Institute website, [click here](#).

# school smarts

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**Special Limited-Time Offer for PTA Units:** If your PTA opens an organizational account by **March 31, 2021**, SkyOne will donate \$1000 to your PTA for every 10 members who open individual SkyOne accounts – plus, we'll reimburse their PTA membership dues for their first year!

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For more information: [www.skyone.org/ca-pta-leaders](http://www.skyone.org/ca-pta-leaders)

# Save the Date...

California State PTA 122nd Annual Convention

**ALL VIRTUAL!**

Business of the Association taking place between:

**MAY 13-16, 2021**

Visit our website for more information and updates



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