

PTA® in California

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All about inclusion: See how PTAs are welcoming all families and communities

Students, families, educators and PTA volunteers at Westminster's Sequoia Elementary School in Orange County (Westminster Council PTA, Fourth District PTA) celebrated cultures, families and community during Take Your Family to School Week earlier this year. *Read more inside.*

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In Memoriam
Donnetta Spink
California State PTA
President 1985-1987

PTA advocates and members were saddened by the passing of Donnetta Spink May 14. She served as California State PTA president from 1985-87. Her strong legacy for PTA and the children, families and communities of California will continue to live on. A born leader, Donnetta exhibited decades of dedication to education by serving in various capacities in the PTA, from president of Arleta's Canterbury Avenue Elementary in the San Fernando Valley in the 1960s to state president in the 1980s. Our thoughts – and our heartfelt thanks – are with her family.



All about inclusion: *continued from cover page*

With help from a \$1,000 Take Your Family to School Week event [grant](#) from National PTA, the school staged a multicultural extravaganza to welcome families of all backgrounds to the school. The event took more than 400 event attendees including National PTA President Otha Thornton around the world with displays, books, art, food, music, costumes, dancing and activities highlighting numerous countries and cultures, all while getting people more engaged and involved in the school community.

Sequoia Elementary PTA President Joanna Sullivan shared that the event was such big hit with the hundreds of families, educators and community members that they're looking at expanding it in the future.

"Our school is made up of multicultural families, and the event really brought the community together," she said, noting that many more families are now getting involved in PTA events, membership and volunteerism. "It was great for the students and really opened up working with, joining and being a part of PTA."

INCLUSION'S IMPORTANT FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

By creating a welcoming environment for all families and increasing parent engagement, everyone wins. When parents are engaged:

- **Students** do better in school regardless of parents' income, education or ZIP code.
- **Educators** are better able to help students through family communication and engagement.

**SHARE
YOUR
IDEAS!**

How is your school creating a welcoming environment for all families and the broader community? Share your thoughts, events and ideas with us: Email communications@capta.org.

A message from

Colleen A. R. You
President



Reflecting on the term

When it comes to positively impacting the lives of *all* children and families, California State PTA is the best. We've taken on many tasks these past two years, just as you have in your schools, so how do we continue to stay focused on what matters? As lifelong learners, what conclusions can we take away from PTA this past term?

PTA is impeccable in its word.

What we say, and how we say it, lend to our high regard, credibility and message. People "feel" our demeanor long before we speak. Everyone can model being approachable, and practice being welcoming to all families. Whether in our local communities or at the State Capitol, PTA represents our members, speaks up and speaks out about our priorities, invests in effective partnerships, celebrates successes and shares best practices. As California remodels our education system to better serve all students, meaningful, inclusive parent engagement is more important than ever.

PTA does not assume; we inform.

It's important that we don't make assumptions – communication is key! California State PTA is always here to help, support and provide you with useful information because we know informed parents become more confident – they grow to be powerful and effective advocates for their children and all children. PTA's role at school is to get the word out on the issues that matter most locally – whether it's about the opportunities inherent in Local Control and Accountability Plans, the implications of new assessments and state standards, or when it's time to advocate for treasured art, PE and science programs as critical components of a well-rounded education.

PTA does not take it personally.

This is a bit hard to conceptualize – how does that relate to my school, you may

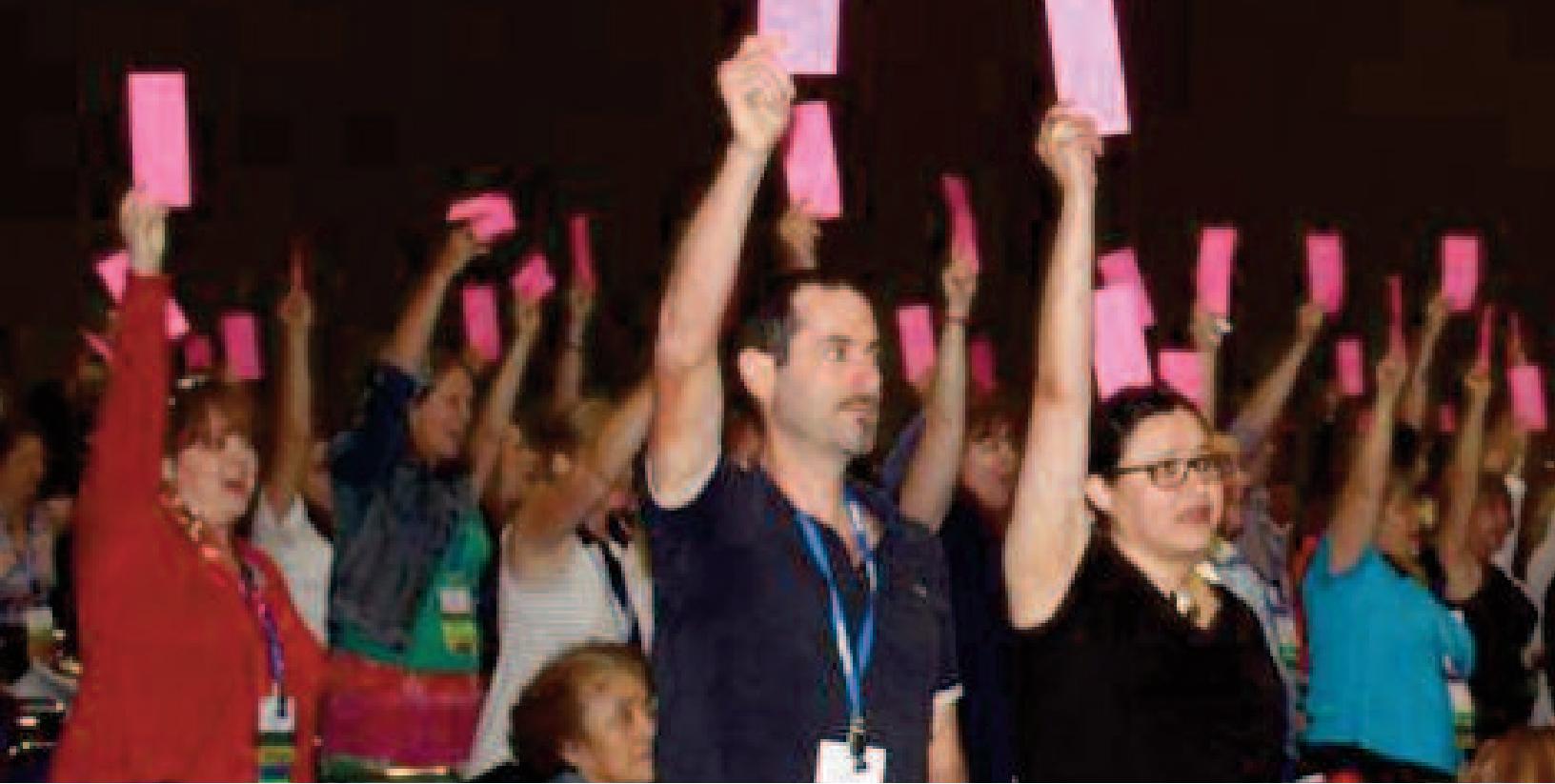
ask? Well, if we are focused on leadership development – paying it forward – and engaging those around us to inspire them and be relevant, that allows us to hone in on what really matters: our children and families. Focusing energy outside of oneself keeps PTA moving forward and on investing in the future, because the focus shifts to key issues and priorities, and away from personalities.

PTA does its best.

This fact has inspired me and absolutely made me so proud of the California State PTA. We value each and every PTA member – we know how hard you are working locally for kids and families. Please accept my sincere thanks for your efforts. Many of you may be first-time members, or transitioning from one PTA role to another, or may be new to a PTA board and your position. I admire you for doing your best – for joining PTA or for stepping up into a leadership role. Take advantage of the engagement opportunities and training and support that PTA provides through your council, district or state events. If you missed State Convention, put it on your calendar now – San Diego, May 4-7, 2016.

I would not have been inspired, or indeed able, to share these observations with members and our partners about our stellar association without the support of an amazing board of directors, board of managers, executive director and PTA staff. It has truly been a team effort, and it's only upon reflection of the past two years that the magnitude of all PTA has accomplished, and will continue to accomplish, starts to sink in.

Thank you all – my PTA family – for the honor of serving this past term as your state president. The opportunities and the confidence you've entrusted in me have led to my growth and provided lessons I will treasure and carry with me always.



Parent leaders support student success at California State PTA's 116th Convention

Volunteers from across the state gathered to engage, educate and advocate for California's children and families



Parents, educators, administrators and children's advocates joined in Sacramento April 30 - May 3 to support student success at California State PTA's 116th Annual Convention.

As California remodels our education system to better serve all students, parent engagement is more important than ever before. Nearly 2,000 PTA parent-volunteer advocates and leaders attending the convention addressed education, health and community issues affecting our state's children and families. They also learned strategies for successfully serving in their volunteer leadership positions. Event attendees were engaged, educated and inspired by a variety of special speakers and events, including:

- Chief Justice of California Hon. Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye speaking on the importance of civics education and engagement.

"PTA is wonderful because all that you do is about kids: That's the highest calling!"

– Hon. Tani Cantil-Sakauye



- Educator, physician, engineer and first African-American woman astronaut Dr. Mae Jemison inspiring attendees with personal insights on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education.
- Vallejo City Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Ramona Bishop speaking on leadership, diversity and engagement.
- The EdSource Symposium, addressing issues facing high-needs children and featuring Dr. Pedro Noguera, State Board of Education President Michael Kirst and more.
- The Equity Institute, held in partnership with the California Association of African-American Superintendents and Administrators, featuring education expert Linda Darling-Hammond on continuous system improvement.
- More than 70 workshops on children's education, health and community issues, including intensive groups of workshops on Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the Local Control and

Accountability Plans (LCAPs), Common Core State Standards, health and safety, advocacy and more.

- More than 150 exhibitors showcasing a wide variety of products and services, including gold-level sponsors Child Safety Network, Chevron and Comcast.
- Recognition of outstanding student-artists from across the state with the Reflections Art Program.

- Business of the association, with delegates installing the 2015 - 2017 Board of Directors, who will take office July 1, as well as considering – and adopting – three resolutions on synthetic marijuana, climate change and LGBTQ+ inclusion to guide the association's advocacy efforts.

"It's so inspiring to see so many parents joining together to advocate for our children and families," said California State PTA President Colleen A.R. You. "We're here for every child — we are their voice!"

For more highlights from the 2015 California State PTA Annual Convention, visit capta.org. You can also review news, updates and photos by following the #PTA4Kids hashtag on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

We'll see you May 4 - 7, 2016, in San Diego for our 117th convention!



"When you engage kids hands-on, you're engaging their hearts."

— Dr. Mae Jemison

'Incredible!' First-time attendee Evelyn Arellano inspired, empowered by convention

One of the many memorable convention moments occurred near the end of the final General Meeting when Evelyn Arellano took to the mic.

Originally motivated to simply thank outgoing California State PTA President Colleen A.R. You for the event, Arellano ended up sharing her personal PTA journey with the thousands of attendees, who gave her a standing ovation.

Arellano outlined how she and other parents, together with the support and guidance of Principal Larry Cecil, brought PTA back to her son's El Monte's Mountain View High School (El Monte Council PTA, First District PTA), which had been without a PTA since she herself graduated from Mountain View 28 years ago.

"This is the beginning of something great at our school," she said, noting that the brand-new unit already has created a scholarship program for seniors. "It's the beginning of a new era."

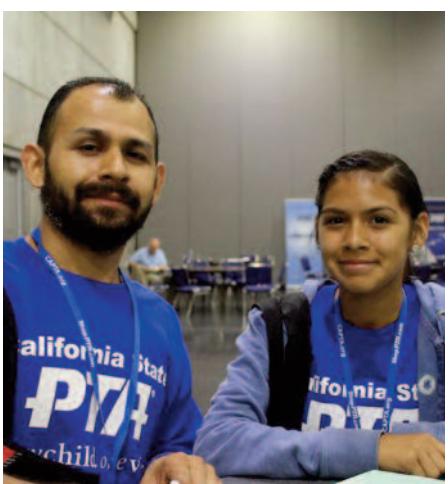
Arellano thanked advocates for all the information, education and inspiration she received at convention, which she looked forward to sharing with Mountain View parents and educators.

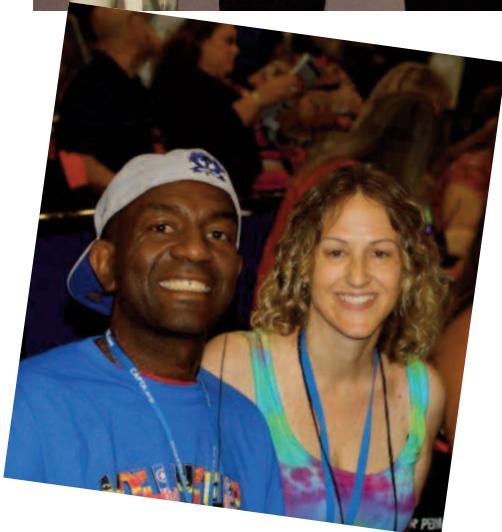
"In one word, 'incredible' – it was incredible to see everyone there advocating for children," she said. "I learned so much and got educated myself by such amazing people, including those who have been around a long time and were even making changes when I myself was a child. I can't wait to return for next year's convention: I'm telling other parents to save the date because, now that we've started, I don't want it to be another 28 years – I just want PTA to continue!"



Convention 2015 • Sacramento









Decades of dedication: Freda Thorlaksson

California State PTA's presidents are recognized at each annual convention, but perhaps one of the most easily recognized attendees at our 116th event was Freda Thorlaksson.

In addition to serving as state president from 1979 to 1981, Thorlaksson advocated for California's children and families for an amazing 25 years at a time when women were pioneering key social changes for themselves and those around them.

"When I first got involved in PTA, it was the beginning of Women's Lib," said the 93-year-old Thorlaksson, who attended convention with her daughter, Carol Eastwick. "It was the first time – and PTA was the first way – that women were being accepted outside of the home."

Thirlaksson reflected on how parent-education classes – forerunners of our current School Smarts Parent Engagement Program – helped her and other parents get updated and involved, and reminded PTA leaders at convention – and throughout the state – of their important role, which she herself knows so well: "Your sole job is to be of help to children."



School's out – summer learning's in!

It's time to ensure your family is ready to make summer matter for your child's academic and social and emotional health. Here's info to ensure your child has a summer filled with learning and fun!

What is "summer learning loss?"

"Summer learning loss" erases academic gains from the school year, placing children at a disadvantage when they return to school. Summer learning loss explains two thirds of the achievement gap between children from middle-income and low-income families. Children from low-income families lose more than two months of reading achievement every summer. Summer learning loss is cumulative and leads to increased dropout rates among students who have fallen behind.

What makes a great summer learning experience?

A great summer learning program has a balance of academic and outdoor experiences that enrich the intellectual, social and physical life of a child. Different from summer school, high quality summer learning programs take advantage of the slower pace summer invites with experiences that bring learning to life.

How can I find out about high-quality summer learning programs?

Many school districts have affordable or free high quality summer learning programs. Explore what your district offers by visiting their website or discussing options with your child's teacher. Invest time in researching the options that are right for your family.



You can help make summer matter for your child:

- 1 Read to your children, or encourage your children to read**, books recommended by their teachers or local library. Sign up for your library's Summer Reading Program, which offers incentives for summertime reading.
- 2 Visit free local learning resources in your community** that are entertaining and educational, such as libraries, parks, museums, universities and recreation centers.
- 3 Play fun math and word games** that turn everyday household activities into learning opportunities. Have your kids add up prices at the grocery store and challenge them to tally up the bill. When going on drives, ask them to look for certain shapes or words on billboards.
- 4 Ask your children's teachers** to recommend educational activities that you can easily access online.
- 5 Get moving and get healthy.** Turn off the TV, computer and video games and keep your kids moving with physical activities that also encourage learning. Organize a scavenger hunt that leads them around a park or museum.

California State PTA is a strong supporter of summer- and extended-learning programs.

Find out more at captapta.org, and visit www.summermatters2you.net for additional summer-learning ideas.

Make summer safe for kids

Warm weather brings more opportunity for outdoor activities. Whether they are young children or teens, keep your kids safe and healthy while they enjoy the summer fun with tips from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



MASTER WATER SAFETY

Water-related activities are popular for getting physical activity and have many health benefits. Here are some hints to stay safe while having fun.

- ★ Learn how to prevent recreational water illnesses and help protect yourself and your kids.
- ★ Help kids get smart about water safety.

Drowning is responsible for more deaths among children ages 1-4 than any other cause except birth defects. Two to three children die every day as a result of drowning.

- ★ Always supervise children when in or around water.
- ★ Teach kids to swim.
- ★ Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- ★ Install a four-sided fence around home pools.



BEAT THE HEAT AND SUN

Heat-related illness occurs when the body's temperature control system is overloaded. Those at greatest risk for heat-related illness include infants and children up to 4 years of age. Even young and healthy people can get sick from the heat if they participate in strenuous physical activities during hot weather. For heat-related illness, the best defense is prevention.

- ★ Never leave infants, children, or pets in a parked car, even if the windows are cracked open.
- ★ Dress infants and children in loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- ★ Schedule outdoor activities carefully, for morning and evening hours.
- ★ Stay cool with cool showers or baths.
- ★ Seek medical care immediately if your child has symptoms of heat-related illness.

Just a few serious sunburns can increase you and your child's risk of skin cancer later in life. Their skin needs protection from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays whenever they're outdoors.

- ★ Cover up to protect against UV rays.
- ★ Use sunscreen with at least SPF 15 and UVA and UVB protection every time you and your child go outside.

PREVENT INJURIES

Each year in the United States, emergency departments treat more than 200,000 children ages 14 and younger for playground-related injuries. Falls at home and on the playground are a common cause of injury.



- ★ Check to make sure that the surfaces under playground equipment are safe, soft, and well-maintained.
- ★ Supervise young children at all times around fall hazards, such as stairs and playground equipment.
- ★ Use stair gates, which can help keep a busy, active child from taking a dangerous tumble.

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. Concussions can occur in any sport or recreation activity.

- ★ Learn concussion signs and symptoms and what to do if a concussion occurs.
- ★ Make sure kids and teens wear the right protective equipment for their sport or recreation activity.

Parents can take many actions to protect their children's health and safety at home.

- ★ Stay smart around the house by following tips on fire prevention, microwave use and living with pets.
- ★ Learn healthy home tips for each room in the house.

And for more on how you can keep your kids safe all year long, visit capta.org for tips and information on health and safety.



Tips for parents in a tech-crazed world

With June as Internet Safety Month, now's a good time to look at the many benefits – and risks – of our wired world to help keep our kids socializing, but safe!

FIRST, THE BENEFITS

- The Internet has created countless new opportunities for learning.
- The Internet is a great tool for searching for new ways to interact with the offline world.
- Rapidly developing technology is making online communication easier and more convenient than ever.

BUT THERE ARE RISKS

- Predators seek out victims who are looking for acceptance and looking to be heard.
- In addition, teach your child to be wary of providing personal information online.
- **Cyberbullying is a growing problem** and is just as real and hurtful as traditional bullying.
- The Internet has the potential to create a cyberbully, too.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Make sure your children feel comfortable talking to you about their online experiences, both good and bad.** Never threaten to take away Internet access as a punishment for something that happens (intentionally or not) to your children while they are online: Chances are your children will just find another way to go online — and this time they may not tell you about what they're doing.
- **Keep your family's computer in an open space in a common room.** You want to be able to casually monitor what your child is doing. In addition, having a computer facing the corner of the room, or generally out of sight of other people, can make the user feel

more isolated, making him or her more vulnerable to online risks.

- **Educate yourself about what your child is doing online, and make sure you are comfortable using the programs your child uses.** If you don't understand something, ask your child. This can be a great way to start conversations.
- **Periodically review with your child his or her list of contacts.** If you don't know someone listed, ask your child about that person.
- **Search the Web for information about your family.** Using a search engine, periodically search for your family members' names on the Internet to see what comes up. You want to stay a step ahead of potential predators, and this is one way to find out what type of information they are able to access about your family. If your child is being cyberbullied, this is also one way you might detect hateful information about your child that is being posted online.
- **Install blocking or monitoring software.** Make sure your children know that you have installed the software and why you have decided to do so. This may make them think twice before doing something online that they know is against your family's rules. However, don't forget that these are just tools; you should always supplement these tools with honest communication with your children.
- **Establish a Media Use Contract with each child in your family.** It's important that you have a conversation with each child to set rules and limits that are individually appropriate. Be explicit about how you intend to monitor your child's online activities and what the consequences will be if the contract is broken. Once the contracts have been signed, display them as a reminder.

Practice cyber-citizenship!



Twitter – Twitter can be thought of as a public diary more than social media. You must be very aware about what every 140 characters give away.



Facebook – Clicking on unsuspecting videos or images can cause viruses to attack your computer or allow host programs to post on your Facebook wall. Do NOT friend someone if you do not instantly recognize him or her: Friending someone who *looks* like a peer can be dangerous.



Tumblr – Don't give away any personal-information hints like names. Since blogs are libraries of thoughts, teenagers must be careful to protect what precious anonymity they possess.



Instagram – Be wary of who you follow, what pictures you like and what pictures you post, because, if you aren't on the private setting, everyone can see what you're up to!



Internet – Things ARE too good to be true: For your teen and for you, beware of ads, coupons, people, places, and basically everything you see on the Internet. Someone on the other side is hoping to take advantage of you while you believe you are safe at home.



And teenagers! – Teens are especially social people! But don't let that be an excuse to not be monitoring their Internet usage. A little goes a long way, and that goes for both monitoring and giving responsibility to your teen. Be respectful of their privacy, but remember, too – they're your responsibility.

**For more information and resources
about technology and Internet safety, check out
capta.org and Common Sense Media.**

Here comes STEM education for a next-generation workforce

California State PTA believes every child should have access to quality education in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). PTA leaders work to support efforts to improve STEM education, enabling more students to acquire skills for access to higher education and employment in the 21st century workforce.



Our efforts include advocating for updated standards and expanded opportunities. It's been nearly 15 years since the development of the current science-education standards. And since that time, major advances in science and our understanding of how students learn science have taken place. That's why California State PTA is proud our state is rolling out the all-new [Next Generation Science Standards](#) this fall with full implementation in several years.

You can help your child develop STEM skills and interests while helping your school and PTA implement these cutting-edge standards for all students' benefit:

- Review and share the [PTA Parents' Guide to Student Success](#), considering how you can support your child's education in Common Core mathematics.

- Advocate for additional STEM course offerings and opportunities with tools from the California STEM Learning Network.
- Find PTA members who work in STEM fields and arrange for them to speak with classes about opportunities in these areas.
- Work with your school staff to start a math, science or computer club, looking to particularly encourage membership by girls and groups often underrepresented in these fields.
- Organize a career fair where local employers and community members speak about what their jobs are like and what jobs can be found in the area.
- Share information with your members such as the [Science: It's a Family Affairs, A Guide for Parents](#), provided by Chevron.

For more information and resources on STEM education, the Next Generation Science Standards and what it all means for your child, visit capta.org.

Family engagement matters!

We want our kids to be successful in school – and in life. But how can we make that happen?

There's no need for a magic wand in your hand or a million dollars in the bank: **It just takes one thing – you.** Decades of research show your involvement in your child's school is a key predictor of your child's educational and lifelong success.

Your involvement in your child's life – reading together, monitoring homework, working with teachers and joining PTA – means far more than parents' income, education or ZIP code. In fact, kids with involved families:

- Attend school regularly.
- Perform better in school.
- Earn higher grades.
- Pass their classes.
- Develop better social skills.
- Go on to college and other educational opportunities.

While one easy yet effective way to be involved is to be a PTA member, there are many other ways that take little time or money to make a difference for your child. In fact, there are [100 easy but effective ways](#) you can help your child succeed, but here are just a few:

- Set up daily routines, including healthy eating and sleeping habits.
- Provide a place and time for homework and check on assignments and projects.
- Show your support and interest by talking about school activities each day.
- Promote literacy by reading to your child and by reading yourself.
- Limit all types of screen time: TV, gaming and computers.
- Express high expectations, standards and encouragement for your child's learning.



- Attend parent-teacher conferences, open houses and back-to-school events whenever possible.
- Participate in decisions affecting your child's education.
- Take advantage of your community's many free or low-cost activities and resources, such as libraries, museums, theaters and zoos.

And family involvement doesn't end with grade school: Staying connected with your child's education remains critical in the middle and high-school years, too – especially as you discuss [college](#) and career choices together!



SCHOOL SMARTS PARENT ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM: CREATING DIVERSE AND MEANINGFUL PARENT INVOLVEMENT

California State PTA's School Smarts Parent Engagement Program – offered in partnership with local school districts and PTAs – is helping more parents learn about their schools and get involved.

Offered in six languages, School Smarts includes a campus-wide engagement event and fun seven-session Parent Academy where parents learn how to help support their children, how the school system works and how to work together to advocate for a quality education for all children that includes the arts.

"I took the School Smarts course to learn more about ways I could more positively engage with my son's school to support him and all the children at his school," said Margaret Wilson, who graduated April 7 from Washington Elementary School's School Smarts program in Riverside Unified School District (Riverside Council PTA, Twenty-Third District PTA). "I was especially interested in learning more about how our school system worked, what changes are in store for the future, how to help bring

about or support needed changes, and how to communicate more effectively with my child's teachers and administrators. I left School Smarts feeling better about our school, more capable of supporting it well, and more prepared to be an active and involved parent."

Parent engagement in schools is more important now than ever before. California's new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) requires school districts to involve parents in planning and decision-making as well as in developing Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs). Many districts are using School Smarts as a tool to strengthen family-school partnerships and increase parents' involvement as part of their planning efforts.

For more information on School Smarts Parent Engagement Program, or family engagement in general, please contact your local PTA or visit captapta.org for easy and free ideas, information and inspiration.



School Smarts: A Model for Creating Meaningful and Diverse Parent Involvement



school smarts
PARENT ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM



Being involved is more important than ever

LCFF gives parents a seat at the table on school-funding priorities

If you haven't yet engaged in your child's school community, now's the time. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is a huge opportunity for you as a parent to shape the vision for your child's education and make it happen!

California's school funding law, the [Local Control Funding Formula](#) is a way for schools to focus on student success. The LCFF also:

- Requires your school district to focus on the eight key areas that help all students succeed.
- Provides extra funding for students with greater challenges.
- Gives your district more flexibility for how to spend its money to improve local schools.

The LCFF requires school districts to involve parents in planning and decision-making as well as in developing Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs). Find out more about this exciting opportunity – and how you can get involved – from your school or local PTA.

Check out our free family-engagement resources

California State PTA offers many **free resources** for families and educators including multi-language materials on Common Core State Standards, student assessments and family engagement, including:

PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

– Available in English and Spanish, this [guide](#) provides specific goals for each of six accepted family engagement standards, as well as indicators for measuring whether those goals are being met.

Parents' Guide to Student Success –

Find out what your child will be learning, at each grade level, in Mathematics and English Language Arts with the new Common Core State Standards. With California State PTA's [Parents' Guide to Student Success](#) – available in six languages – you'll also learn more about how you can support your child's learning and other helpful information.

Your Child's Education Begins at Home

– The California Teachers Association and California State PTA offer [seven key tips](#) in 11 languages.

Ed100 – Working in partnership with California State PTA, [Ed100](#) takes the mystery out of California's education system! California's education system is changing fast: Learn how it really works with this fun, free online program so you can make a difference for your child and school.

PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide
The Framework for Your School District's Local Control and Accountability Plan

LCFF + LCAP
Your voice matters

National PTA
everychild, everyvoice®

KINDERGARTEN

6TH GRADE

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH

HIGH SCHOOL MATH

PTA in California • June 2015



Advocacy in action: PTA members making a difference for California's children and families



Advocacy is the heart of PTA. Whether we're working with teachers to ensure our children's needs are met, voicing our opinions to districts on Local Control Funding Formula priorities or testifying in the Capitol for statewide changes, advocacy is how parents create change. Here are just a few of the latest ways California State PTA parents are making a difference, not only for their own children, but for *all* children.

One of California State PTA's advocacy goals is to "support the needs of vulnerable children," and we advocate on a variety of bills to improve children's health, safety and education. Many issues affecting our kids are being discussed – and even sometimes hotly debated – in the State Capitol, and parents are there to remind lawmakers that children always need to be California's number-one priority. Here are three current bills we're advocating for in the Capitol.

A FOCUS ON VULNERABLE CHILDREN

- **Vaccinations** – [Senate Bill 277](#) would eliminate the vaccine personal-belief exemption and have all medically eligible children be immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases prior to starting school or child care, thus protecting vulnerable children. SB 277 protects the vital educational rights of vulnerable children who cannot receive immunizations, but does not interfere with the medical exemption that is allowed under current law. PTA has been a strong supporter of vaccinations for decades: In 1976, California State PTA adopted a resolution on immunization of preschool children and, in 1990, adopted another on the measles, mumps and rubella vaccination.

■ Homeless children and youth – Senate Bill 636, co-sponsored by California State PTA and K to College, would help California's 300,000 homeless children and youth receive some much-needed direct assistance. The bill would provide funding for school supplies, dental supplies, socks, shoes and hygienic products for homeless children and youth, putting these young Californians on a more equal playing field with other students.

■ Opportunity gap – California State PTA also is co-sponsoring Assembly Bill 80 to establish and fund an Interagency Task Force on the Status of Boys and Men of Color to improve life outcomes and address the persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color (Black, Hispanic and Native Americans).

"No matter where we are –in the Capitol, at our schools or in our neighborhoods – PTA members are advocates always," said California State PTA Director of Legislation Kathy Moffat.



California State PTA Director of Legislation Kathy Moffat (Front, first from right) joins Education Coalition leaders at a press conference to advocate for school funding.

SCHOOL FUNDING IMPROVED, BUT MORE TO DO

California's schools took the biggest hit during the Great Recession, and California children deserve better than second-best. That's why California State PTA parents continue to speak up for [adequate and stable funding for all students](#).

Gov. Jerry Brown released his proposed state budget revision May 15, which includes a \$6.1-billion increase for schools to uphold the Proposition 98 guarantee – a positive trend following many years of damaging cuts to

our students. But the post-recession recovery's still in the beginning stages, and PTA advocates and Education Coalition members will remain vigilant in defending funding and services for California children: our #1 priority.

Our efforts include involvement in the Education Coalition. The coalition includes major statewide associations representing teachers, administrators, school employees and districts that work together on state-budget and school-funding issues. PTA is the sole organization representing parents on the coalition.



ARTS EDUCATION: A KEY PART OF OUR ADVOCACY

Parents know: The arts matter. That's why parents and PTA members consistently rate arts education as a priority. Based on that, California State PTA continues to advocate for a complete education that includes the **arts for every child** to help prepare them for future jobs — and future success.

Arts education took a big leap forward with State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson's issuance of the new **"Blueprint for Creative Schools,"** which serves as the foundation for a new era in arts education in California public schools.

California State PTA representatives served on the group that developed the Blueprint, and the association is part of the new **CREATE CA** Coalition dedicated to building public will around the recommendations.



YOU'RE AN ADVOCATE, TOO!

All PTA members are advocates: Just by joining PTA, you not only are supporting your own child, school and community — you show you're standing with more than 800,000 other California State PTA members who are speaking for every child with one voice. **Thank you for being an advocate for California children!** To find out more about our many advocacy activities and to get involved, please contact your local PTA or visit captac.org for the latest on our state-level efforts.

Moving beyond the bubble: Improved student assessments are here

Our children's school assessments are changing. Gone are the multiple-choice, fill-in-the-bubble tests, now replaced with high-tech opportunities for our kids to show what they really know through writing, critical thinking and problem-solving — real skills needed for real-world success.



NEW SCORING

The new assessments offer a more complete snapshot of your child's progress, so your child's score will appear in a new way. These brand-new tests are too fundamentally different from the old exams to make any reliable comparisons between old scores and new. **That's OK.** This year's test results will only establish a baseline for the progress we expect students to make over time.

The new assessment score report uses four achievement levels: standard exceeded, standard met, standard nearly met, and standard not met. These levels designate the degree of "progress toward mastery of the knowledge and skills needed for success in future coursework." For 11th-graders the assessments are additionally used to show whether students are on track to be ready for college-level work.

For math and English language arts, students will receive a separate composite score between 2,000 and 3,000 points, falling within one of the achievement levels. In addition, achievement levels are shown for specific areas within math and within English language arts to give you more detailed information about your child. With the new assessments, parents will ultimately be able to see the growth in a student's scores from year to year. The reports will likely go to parents in late summer.



Information will be available to teachers, schools and school districts on a timely basis so it can be used to help students learn. Teachers should receive the scores of their students electronically much faster than in the past, which will help them to adjust their teaching and plan for the next year.

NEW ASSESSMENTS JUST ONE PART OF EDUCATION UPDATES

It's important to remember that the new assessments are only one part of our upgraded education system, which includes new learning standards and more decision-making at the local level. Standardized tests are just one way of measuring student progress, along with class assignments and report cards.

Further adjustments will likely be needed along the way to help our children make lasting progress. Both patience and persistence are required to help our schools and students continue to succeed during this time of remodeling California's education system.

So watch for those new assessment scores this summer, and, if you have any questions, contact your school or your local PTA!



VISUAL ARTS
Treasure Hunt
Anastasia Logacheva, Grade: 2
Naples Bayside Academy PTA
Thirty-Third District PTA

Reflections Art Program celebrates creativity

Experience the award-winning student works of art for yourself at capta.org.

Student-artists of all ages took center stage May 2 in Sacramento at the California State PTA [Reflections Art Program](#) award event, held in conjunction with the association's annual convention.

From kindergarteners to high-school seniors, the 30 young California artists embraced National PTA's 2015 theme – “The World Would Be a Better Place If...” — as the basis for their Award of Excellence-winning works in dance choreography, music composition, film production, photography, literature or visual arts. Each entrant's work originally was submitted at their local-school level; students were then selected to be honored at the PTA council, district and state levels.

Each Reflections honoree received a medal and certificate, a \$100 savings bond and an expense-paid trip for the artist and a guardian to the California

State PTA Annual Convention in Sacramento. Each student also had the opportunity to present his or her work on the big stage at the Sacramento Convention Center during the evening special event.

“It was inspiring to see how PTA cared about continuing arts in school — I was really grateful to be a part of it,” said honoree Sara Crossman, a Palos Verdes Peninsula High School senior who performed her own dance choreography, “Living in the Present Moment — How the World Would Be a Better Place,” at convention. “I definitely have told the younger girls on my dance team how great of an experience Reflections was and that everyone should enter!”

The works of Crossman and other selected California State PTA Reflections honorees were submitted and judged for National PTA's nationwide awards.

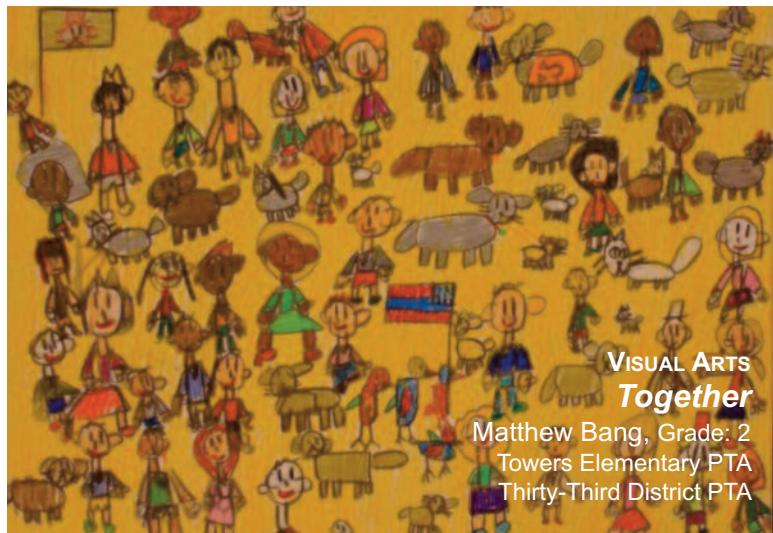


PHOTOGRAPHY

Fresh Air, Blue Skies

Phoebe Leung, Grade: 7

Henry E. Huntington Middle School PTA, Inc.
First District PTA



VISUAL ARTS
Together

Matthew Bang, Grade: 2
Towers Elementary PTA
Thirty-Third District PTA



DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY

***Living in the Present Moment:
How the World Would Be a Better Place***

Sara Crossman, Grade: 12
Palos Verdes Peninsula High School PTSA
Thirty-Third District PTA

PTA: BRINGING THE ARTS TO LIFE FOR STUDENTS

Since its establishment in 1969 by National PTA, Reflections has brought the arts to life for more than 10 million students across the United States.

"Reflections increases arts-education awareness by unleashing creative talents, encouraging self-expression, experiencing the fun and joy of creation, tapping into critical-thinking skills and receiving positive recognition," said California State PTA Reflections Art Program Chairman Anna Marie San Roman. "Although we honor these children, we are the ones who are truly honored – honored to have the opportunity to be amazed, moved and inspired by the creativity of California's young artists."

And Reflections is just one of the many ways PTA focuses on promoting access to quality arts education for all students in California.

"Those of us in this hall know that the arts are not something our children can do without," said California

State PTA Special Committee for the Arts Chairman Barbara Lederman in helping kick off the Saturday event. "Studies show that the arts improve student achievement: There are significant links between arts integration in the curriculum and successful student achievement, particularly in math and English. Arts are especially effective in improving achievement for English-learners and students from low-income families.

"Arts education develops the four major components of Common Core: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication," Lederman added. "In addition, schools with vigorous arts programs experience higher parent and community involvement."

To find out more about the Reflections Art Program, to see all of 2015's award-winners or to begin or expand a Reflections Art Program in your school, please contact your local PTA or visit captapta.org.

New PTA leaders: We've got the tools you need to succeed



Calling all new leaders! Whether this is your first year serving local PTA officer before, or if you've previously served in one office but now have been elected to another, California State PTA's got a whole system of tools, information and resources to help you get your year off to a great start – and to help you succeed through your entire term.

But before we say anything else, we want to say **THANK YOU** for taking a leadership role in PTA. Your dedication means so much for our kids, schools and communities! PTA started with a just a handful of dedicated leaders more than a century ago, and today thousands of leaders like you across our state and nation are carrying our founders' vision — and our children's futures — forward.

Running a PTA is fun and rewarding, but it's also an important responsibility. With PTA, though, you never have to go it alone: Our unit, council, district and state structure always means help is just a phone call — or email or text or fax or Facebook post — away.

Let's get started!

STARTING YOUR YEAR OF LEADERSHIP

Summer may be a quiet time at our schools, but that makes it the ideal time to start ramping up what will be a year of activities. Here are some tried-and-true steps you can take **right now** in the summer to set yourself and your PTA up for year-long success:

- Work with your predecessor to understand responsibilities.
- Assure that roster of elected officers has been submitted to council (if in council) or district PTA.
- Review [bylaws](#), our unique online [Toolkit](#) for leaders and our [insurance guide](#).
- Check out council, district, state and National PTA websites Attend officers/chairmen training provided by your district PTA.
- Begin to attend council meetings (if in council).
- Watch for California State PTA and National PTA summer mailings, such as the helpful "Leadership Made Easy Starter Guide to PTA Success."

- Appoint parliamentarian/chairmen and work toward filling open board positions.
- Assure officers/chairmen receive a copy of the bylaws, procedure books and computer files.
- Meet with board-elect to review/establish mission statement and set goals.
- Review programs; determine those to continue, discuss possible new ones.
- Prepare for back-to-school activities such as kindergarten meet-and-greet events, membership drives and outreach activities.
- Prepare and have preliminary budget approved and obtain authorization for summer expenditures.
- Ensure end-of-year audit and annual financial report are completed.

And while these are helpful summertime steps lay the school-year foundation, we've got an entire step-by-step calendar to help you and all your officers plan ahead for a smooth and successful leadership year.

MEMBERSHIP MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Where would our children, schools and neighborhoods be without all our amazing members? With more than 800,000 members throughout California, PTA is the largest children's advocacy organization in the state, speaking for every child with one voice. The more members we have, the stronger our voice becomes and the more we can do for each and every one of our kids.

And in addition to strengthening our statewide voice, building your PTA membership can really pay off for your school locally: Not only will your PTA have the support of parents and families, but your PTA could qualify for awesome membership-challenge incentives. This year's challenge theme is simple but says it all: "Focus on Membership."

To help you and your PTA focus on membership, we've got lots of tools you can use: Videos, customizable fliers, membership cards, graphics, articles and exclusive Member Perks emphasize the benefits of PTA membership for all involved: parents, schools, PTAs and – who we're all doing it for – our children.

FINANCIAL TOOLS ARE HERE TO HELP YOU

Whether you're a just-elected leader or a longtime leader, we're here to help you with financial and administrative services developed by — and for — PTA volunteers and leaders just like you.

When tax-filing deadlines are on the horizon, our online [Tax Filing Support Center](#) provides step-by-step filing instructions, tools and forms. When your bylaws need changing, our [electronic bylaws](#) help keep your PTA up-to-date and on track.

Take advantage of handy tools to help make running your PTA easier, simpler and better. And if you have financial questions, don't wait — contact your council, district or California State PTA today to get assistance and advice from experienced PTA leaders and staff. **We're here to help you!**



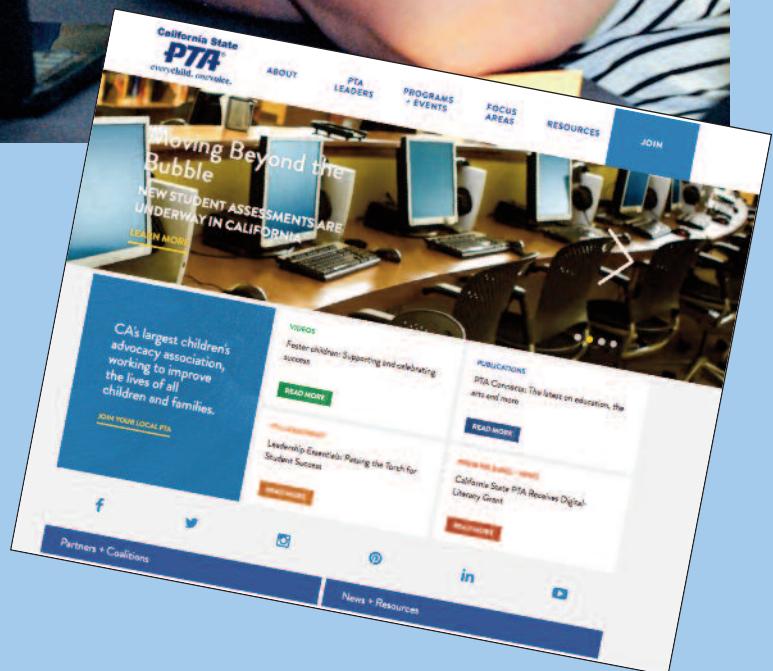


CAPTA.ORG: DESIGNED WITH YOU IN MIND

California State PTA recently updated its website – capta.org – to help make your job easier. We listened to what parents, members and leaders want most: Ease of use, helpful tools and timely information are all part of our new streamlined design to help make your PTA – and your PTA experience – the best it can be.

The new mobile- and tablet-friendly site has all the tools and resources you need to help carry out your role as a PTA leader. Our new website includes an entire section for PTA leaders like you including:

- Our helpful *Toolkit*.
- Leadership and training assistance.
- Tax Filing Support Center, featuring step-by-step instructions and forms.
- Finance and insurance materials and reminders.
- Grants and awards to help establish and build local programs.
- Tools for marketing and growing your PTA.
- Resources and materials to help you advocate on the issues you care most about.
- And more!



WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

We've only scratched the surface of the many ways we're working to support you as a PTA leader because, as you and your PTA succeed, so do our kids, schools, neighborhoods – and even our state! Thank you again for your dedication to California's children, and if you have any questions, suggestions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact your council, district or California State PTA office, or write to leadership@capta.org for assistance.

PTAEZ makes your PTA accounting – and life – easier!

As one of our dedicated PTA leaders, you've already got plenty on your plate: That's why **PTAEZ** was created to make your life – and the life of your unit – simpler, easier and more rewarding!

PTAEZ is an online accounting program specifically set up to handle the unique needs of PTA units. From generating financial reports, strengthening financial controls and procedures, ensuring smooth record transitions from year to year and assisting you with tax filing, PTAEZ is all about making your accounting as "EZ" as it can be!



ONLINE PROGRAM STREAMLINES ACCOUNTING

PTAEZ offers a simplified way to account for your funds and other organizational requirements through an easy-to-use online program. You don't have to transfer all of your files or download software between computers from year to year, treasurer to treasurer. And you never have to go it alone: The program features service representatives that speak our PTA language and who know the correct way to record and report your unit's financial activity.

With this unique program, you're able to:

- Easily record your transactions within a secure ledger program that can be accessed from any desktop or laptop computer with internet connectivity. You can record checks, receipts, deposits, and electronic transfers, and you can even print your actual checks with the system.
- Manage budgets, fundraisers and programs, and generate reports to review your progress.
- Broaden your fundraising reach with an integrated online store that is easy to set up – sell memberships and receive donations from friends and family not in your area.

- Send emails to individuals or groups with attachments.
- Provide limited access to others for viewing, or even provide functional capability to others within your account.
- Generate a variety of PTA-specific reports to include federal and California tax worksheets for tax-form completion.
- And more!

MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON FREE, LOW-COST SERVICES

Many of PTAEZ's programs such as officer contacts, e-cards and – starting July 1 – tax and document uploads are free, while other optional items such as the customizable online store are priced on a sliding scale dependent upon your unit's revenue. If your unit's looking to try PTAEZ, you won't want to miss the commitment- and cost-free 45-day free trial on the entire program. And newly chartered PTA units also receive an entire year of all PTAEZ services at no cost whatsoever.

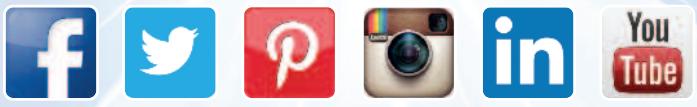
For more information on PTAEZ and its many free or low-cost services, please email ptaez@csmcentral.com or call (877) 944-7798.

Tweet. Post. Like. Share. Comment. Tag.

CONNECT!

Stay connected with the latest news, resources and information by following California State PTA on your favorite social media network and by subscribing to free email publications and updates.

VISIT capta.org



The California State PTA Webstore

ShopPTA.com

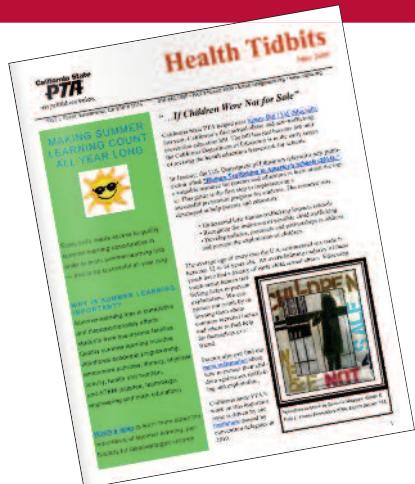


PROMOTE
YOUR PTA

Banners
Signs
Posters
Buttons
Decals
& More

Help make your school and community a healthier place for children with *Health Tidbits*.

Each month, you'll learn more about key initiatives and programs to help make your school and community a healthier place.



Sign up online at capta.org.

2015 Important Dates

July 2015

- Join your local PTA to support your child's education
- Continue summer learning activities
- For new PTA officers, check out page 24-27 to help jump start your PTA this school year

August 2015

- Join the PTA community on your favorite social media network
- Sign up for monthly emails from PTA at capta.org in the areas that interest you most
- Share your child's #FirstDayofSchoolSmiles picture with PTA on Facebook or Instagram

September 2015

- Attend Back-to-School Night
- Meet your child's teacher if you haven't already
- Ask your school principal about FREE resources to help keep your child healthy and ready to learn

*Due in state PTA office

Articles appearing in this newsletter may be reprinted in PTA unit, council and district newsletters only. 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.

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