

CALIFORNIA K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING CRISIS

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 6, 1998

Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2018

- WHEREAS, California's economy is the 7th largest in the world and its per capita income ranks 13th in the United States, while its rank is 41st nationwide in per student funding; and
- WHEREAS, California per student funding for basic district operations, after adjusting for inflation, is \$400.00 per student less today than in 1987, and currently an increase of \$1,100.00 per child funding is necessary just to reach the national average; and
- WHEREAS, California still has the most crowded classrooms in the United States, despite the recent "Class Size Reduction Program," with an average of about 24 students per teacher compared to the national average of 17 to 1; and
- WHEREAS, California funding for state adopted textbooks ranks 45th in the nation, providing \$29.00 per student per year, while the average cost of textbooks is \$60.00 to \$80.00 per student per subject; and
- WHEREAS, California has one school librarian for every 6,179 students while the national average is one per 882 students, and California school libraries average 11 books (with an average copyright date of 1973) per student compared to the national average of 20 books per student; and
- WHEREAS, California schools rank 49th in the nation on the number of district officials and administrators per student, 50th in the nation on the number of principals per student, and 51st in the nation on the number of guidance counselors serving our students; and
- WHEREAS, California school districts are faced with a rapidly growing population that will require about \$15 billion of new construction before 2005 and \$22 billion to repair and modernize aging facilities, while hampered by the current requirement of a two-thirds majority vote to pass a local school bond; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts work to educate local public officials, the community and the media that California K-12 public schools are underfunded, which has created a crisis situation in both school facilities needs and in educational program needs; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts work with local and state policy-makers to develop and pursue a long-term school facilities plan that addresses the current school facilities crisis and ensures that school districts will be able to secure adequate funding to meet their school facilities needs; and be it further

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RESOLVED, That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to mobilize local public officials and community members to encourage state senators, state assembly members and the Governor to increase funding for basic education in California K-12 public schools to no less than the national average.

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(School funding data was drawn from information published by EdSource in 1997, and from information provided by the California Department of Education.)

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

California schools are challenged with the task of educating twelve percent of our nation's children. How our state meets the needs of these K-12 students will not only impact our state, but our nation as well.

Our school districts have never recovered from the impact of the funding cutbacks due to the passage of Proposition 13. While this initiative was meant to provide tax relief to homeowners, in fact the major portion of tax relief (about two-thirds) has benefited corporations, not homeowners. This law reduced the income of our school districts by billions of dollars annually. Furthermore, Proposition 98, which was intended to provide a minimum below which schools could not fall, has been treated by lawmakers as a ceiling.

Despite some state funding increases in recent years, California has plunged from the envy of the nation in school resources to a spot near the bottom of the U.S. in funding support for K-12 education. If Californians spent the same percentage of their incomes on schools today as they did 25 years ago, our schools would have \$17 billion per year more than we have today.

Funding is needed to alleviate crowded classrooms, to provide necessary textbooks, library books, administrative and resource personnel, and to build new schools to meet the needs of a growing population and to repair aging facilities. Contrary to public opinion, California schools receive very little from the state lottery, actually less than two percent of the educational budget.

The school facilities crisis, a critical PTA issue for many years, is becoming even more severe as an increasing number of aging school buildings need repair and modernization, additional classroom space is needed to reduce class size, and new facilities are needed in growing communities. State school bond measures provide only a portion of the school facilities funding needed statewide. Local communities must be given the tools to do adequate school facilities planning and to generate revenue from local sources, including local school bond measures which are costly to mount, but currently are very difficult to pass because of the required two-thirds majority.

We, the members of the California State PTA, are presenting this challenge to our locally elected leaders and policy-makers: to realize just how desperate is the status of California school funding and to encourage the resolve of our leaders to remedy this crisis of neglect. The "Great State of California" can do better for its children—our future depends on it.