

COMPUTER WORKSTATION HEALTH

Adopted by Convention Delegates, May 2010

- WHEREAS,** The health and well-being of children and youth are among the primary concerns of the PTA, and the PTA works with public schools and districts to ensure that all children and youth have access to appropriate and safe classroom resources; and
- WHEREAS,** The majority of school-age children use computers on a regular and ever-increasing basis, as early as preschool and continuing into adulthood; and
- WHEREAS,** Many public school students sit in classrooms and computer labs with improperly aligned posture, and there is little or no understanding of the importance of workstation ergonomics in our schools; and
- WHEREAS,** Research shows that children and youth are experiencing significant musculoskeletal discomfort associated with computer use; and
- WHEREAS,** Incorrect ergonomics and improper posture at computer workstations are contributing to health problems and repetitive stress injuries in the United States; and
- WHEREAS,** Research shows that repetitive stress injuries are developed over a number of years, and therefore students' postural habits during school years will affect their health as young adults; and
- WHEREAS,** Ergonomic intervention and education have been shown to reduce discomfort caused by frequent computer use; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA, its units, councils and districts disseminate information to school districts, parents and the community about workstation ergonomics and computer use posture, and promote awareness of the danger of repetitive stress injuries; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urges its units, councils, and districts to recommend to their school districts that all computer workstations in schools be ergonomically correct and adjustable to fit the needs of students and teachers of all sizes.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The lack of attention to correct body posture while using computers has become a serious health hazard that is costing people, businesses and government billions of dollars each year. Tens of thousands of people each year are diagnosed with repetitive stress injuries. In fact, it is the No. 1 work-related health problem in the United States, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). But what was once considered an adult diagnosis is now occurring as early as the teenage years. Students are using computers starting as early as the preschool years and consistently by the time they are in kindergarten. There is a strong correlation between this increased computer use and poor posture at the computer with early onset of repetitive stress injuries in our students.

Students and a majority of teachers are unaware of correct body posture and positioning when seated at the computer. Computer stations in schools are frequently arranged such that desks, chairs and computer monitors remain at the same stationary height while students come in a wide variety of sizes. In order to prevent widespread health problems in students as they grow older, we need to make the importance of correct posture and proper ergonomic workstation setup and proper posture habits while working at a computer a standard part of computer education. Promotion and practice of proper workstation health within the structured school environment will influence young people to practice proper sitting posture during both school and non-school hours.