

## EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY FUNDING

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1995  
Reviewed by the Board of Managers April 2015

- WHEREAS, Technology is now generally recognized as an important component of teaching and learning and as an essential skill for the work force of the 21st Century; and
- WHEREAS, PTA's mission is to "speak on behalf of all children and youth." And, at present, technology is being implemented throughout California on a district-by-district basis without reference to the California Master Plan for Educational Technology or any other effective, consistent and equitable plan; and
- WHEREAS, Access to the information superhighway will provide extensive opportunities for all students for distance learning, school-to-work internship training, business partnerships, information dissemination (particularly when libraries are on-line with schools), education reform, collaborative learning, community outreach, parental involvement, instructional support, operational efficiencies, and staff development; and
- WHEREAS, In 1993, California ranked 44th of the 50 states and, in 1994, ranked 50th of the 50 states in the student to computer ratio. In '93-'94, California allocated only \$2.35 per student for technology (compared, for example, to \$153 per student in Connecticut and \$149 per student in Kentucky); and
- WHEREAS, The *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* includes a national vision and strategy to infuse technology and technology planning into all educational programs and staff development carried out within school systems; and
- WHEREAS, California policy makers, including the Governor, California educators, the California Business Roundtable and the Education Summit have addressed the need for technology to become a high priority for California education; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to educate parents, teachers, administrators, students and the community about the California Master Plan for Educational Technology, the role technology can play in the classroom and also to encourage them to bring together community resources to support the implementation of technology in education and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA support legislation to address technology needs on a statewide basis, with a consistent effort to link all schools and libraries to the information superhighway; and be it further

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**RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA support legislation to promote the inclusion of technology in California’s educational institutions, with particular attention paid to supporting proposals to fund the infrastructure, staff development, curriculum design, software and equipment required, with consistent and adequate funding outside the Proposition 98 funding level guarantees, including, but not limited to bond issues, public-private partnerships, incentives to business, use of special funds, competitive grant programs (private and federal), revenues generated by regulatory processes, and allocation of state resources.

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### **BACKGROUND SUMMARY**

Technology can play many roles in education today. When properly used it can make the process of education easier, more enjoyable, and more precise. It can allow teachers and schools more flexibility in how they organize classes and where students are located. It provides a connection and access to resources outside the classroom. Its use prepares students for the jobs that will be available in the 21st century. For all these reasons, technology should be an integral part of a modern education.

Today the business world and government have made great strides in connecting their offices to the information superhighway. The areas that have been left behind are our nation’s schools and libraries, yet these are perhaps the most important to link to the world of communication. On a national level, through *Goals 2000* and the Office of Educational Technology, a commitment has been made to make technology a basic component of our system of education, but the states retain the obligation to implement technology in the schools.

California has committed some resources to technology (over \$122 million since 1984) in the form of grant programs and regional and state support services. In 1992 the California Department of Education published its California Educational Technology Master Plan, making recommendations in nine areas:

Technology in every learning environment  
Professional development and support  
A Golden State Education Network  
Instructional & Information Resource  
Student data Resource

Management information system  
Educational Technology Coordination  
Evaluating the Implementation of the Plan  
Resources to Accomplish the Plan  
(list from The California Master Plan for  
Educational Technology, April 1992)

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## **Educational Technology Funding – continued**

The Commission that wrote the Plan estimated the cost to fully implement the plan would be around \$1 billion. At this time there is no designated funding source that comes anywhere close to that figure. Existing state programs make approximately \$13 million available to pilot projects, resource centers and programs, and to individual districts and consortia in the form of grants; private industry adds well over a million dollars to that total. Both major telecommunications companies in California, Pacific Bell and GTE, have announced programs to provide free consulting services, communications credits, and technical support to link schools to their phone lines. As positive as these efforts are, none of these commitments will provide the resources needed to fully integrate California's schools with the information superhighway and provide our students with the skills necessary to succeed in an increasingly complex world.

This resolution is an effort to engage California PTA's significant lobbying strength on behalf of funding for technology in the schools. It is important that the state identify a stable funding source for this effort. It is also essential that the money for technology not come from funds already allocated to the classroom. Our schools are so underfunded now that additional cuts to support technology would be counterproductive. The technology effort should be funded outside the Proposition 98 funding guarantee, and creativity should be encouraged in finding a funding source for those funds. The state should look at all options, including state bonds, a small end user surcharge on telecommunications services, and federal and private grants. Any money raised for this purpose should not be available for diversion into other programs, but should be restricted to the technology effort.

If California can make the necessary commitment to technology in the schools, the education system in the state will serve its students better and will provide an outstanding .. for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.