

**LEARNING DISABILITIES AND
LEARNING DISABILITIES IN GIFTED CHILDREN**

(Adopted by Convention Delegates May 2000)

Reviewed by Board of Managers April 2010

- WHEREAS,** The California State PTA believes that children and youth have the right to equal educational opportunities through public education to develop their capabilities to the maximum, and that a closer relationship between the home and the school must be established to promote more effective parent participation in the education of children and youth; and
- WHEREAS,** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that all children have available to them a free and appropriate education designed to meet their needs; however some students who are identified as learning disabled, including gifted students with learning disabilities, are in schools or districts that do not have the resources to properly assist them; and
- WHEREAS,** There is a need to increase awareness and sensitivity to the diverse educational and social needs of children and youth who have learning disabilities, including gifted students with learning disabilities; and
- WHEREAS,** The individuals who influence a child's or youth's educational success need training in early and accurate identification of learning disabilities, in appropriate modification of classroom and instructional strategies, and in the need for and value of parent involvement; and
- WHEREAS,** Learning disabled and learning disabled gifted students need assistance beyond the classroom with social development, post secondary education and employment; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts work with the California Department of Education to make available materials to support and educate school districts, school staff, parents and students regarding learning disabilities and learning disabilities in gifted students; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA encourage and support legislation and school district policies that will further staff development and training and provide support staff in the areas of learning disabilities and learning disabled gifted students; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA encourage the statewide development and use of appropriate assessment tools, testing materials and methods to assess growth in student learning and to identify students with learning disabilities and/or learning disabilities with giftedness; and be it further

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RESOLVED, That the California State PTA encourage its units, councils and districts to make available materials to support and assist school districts, parents and youth in the area of social development, preparation for post-secondary education and post-education employment for learning disabled and learning disabled gifted students; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA forward this resolution to the National PTA for consideration by the delegates at the National PTA Convention in June 2001.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Current studies on learning disabilities and the occurrence of learning disabilities in gifted children have produced heightened awareness, and consequently a greater percentage of students are being identified as learning disabled. There are still many learning disabled students who are not identified, especially among gifted children.

In 1998 in California there were 344,824 documented learning disabled students according to California's Special Education Statewide Enrollment Data, by disability category as of December 1, 1998. There are no statistics on how many of those students are gifted because the state of California does not record this information. Some learning disabled students and gifted students with learning disabilities are identified but attend schools that do not have the resources to properly assist them. Between 1977 and 1996, the percentage of children with specific learning disabilities as a percentage of total public school enrollment (grades K-12) rose from two to six percent. (Reference The Condition of Education 1998, Indicator 45.)

The occurrence of learning disabilities among gifted children is a real condition that has not been properly addressed. The results are often that these students drop out academically and socially because not only are their unique academic and social needs not being met, they are frequently not even recognized.

Many of the issues expressed in this resolution can be summarized in the following quote by Mary E. Cronin, Ph.D. and Paul J. Gerber, Ph.D. from the *TL & LD Journal*, 1982, "Preparing the Learning Disabled Adolescent for Adulthood," pg. 55:

The experience of learning disabled students in late adolescence is markedly different from that of their normal peers. By definition, they are a group of individuals with diverse psychological, academic, social, emotional and vocational profiles.

Further, the Learning Disabilities Association Post-Secondary Education Subcommittee in *The Gram*, March/April 1999, states:

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For a student to have a good experience in the world of work, the amount and type of preparation that leads up to employment can make the difference between success and failure ... preparing for entry into the job market is a developmental process and well thought out transition planning can insure that the student is ready to take on the challenge.

The learning disabled and the gifted student with learning disabilities continue to need help in these areas throughout late adolescence in order to master the coping skills necessary to become productive adults.