

## PARENT/COMMUNITY ACTION FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 5, 1993

*Reviewed by Board of Managers January 2013*

- WHEREAS, The fourth Object of the National PTA states: To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth; and
- WHEREAS, The fifth Object of the National PTA states: To develop between educators and the general public such unified efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education; and
- WHEREAS, The California State PTA Mission Statement reads as follows: The mission of PTA in California is threefold:
- to support and speak on behalf of all children and youth in the schools, in the community, and before governmental agencies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children;
  - to assist parents in developing the skills they need to nurture children; and
  - to promote parent and public involvement in schools and communities; and
- WHEREAS, The **Effective Schools** research has shown that among the elements effective schools have in common is a strong parent involvement program; and
- WHEREAS, Extensive research by the California State PTA has shown that “grass roots” action is the best means of securing quality education for all children, an education that will prepare them to be successful, productive citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; and
- WHEREAS, The California State PTA has adopted four education White Papers, detailing PTA’s education philosophy. These are: **Education: The Early Years, Ages Four to Six; Education: The Elementary Years, Ages Six to Ten; Education: The Middle Years, Ages Ten to Fourteen; Education: The High School Years, Ages Fourteen to Eighteen; and**
- WHEREAS, The California State PTA’s position paper, SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES, states, in part: The California State PTA believes that parents and other concerned adults have a right to join together to affect the education of all children and to participate in making decisions affecting policies; and
- WHEREAS, Despite Proposition 98 (which was supposed to guarantee an adequate level of school funding), the severe recession in California has resulted in major reductions in education funds in fiscal years 1991-92 and 1992-93, and the state’s fiscal condition is not expected to improve in the foreseeable future; now therefore be it

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**RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA provide for its units, councils and districts information and strategies to enable them to effect changes necessary to ensure quality education in their local schools, to enable them to interact effectively with their school districts, and to enable them to build alliances within their communities in support of their schools; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA provide a training program for its units, councils and districts that will enable them to take a leadership role in efforts to ensure that school districts and local schools make changes necessary to provide quality education for all children;

- hold schools and teachers accountable for student performance;
- involve themselves in outreach programs to include all parents in such efforts; and
- involve themselves in the creation of community alliances to accomplish these goals; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts seek to effect a reordering of priorities in the allocation of education funds to ensure a more effective, efficient and improved delivery of the instructional program to better meet the needs of all students.

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## BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The California State PTA has serious concerns about the adverse effects of the severe budget cuts of the last two fiscal years on California's public schools and on the progress of school reform. Therefore, the Board of Managers, at its October 1992 meeting, authorized a study committee to investigate the situation and bring its conclusions and recommendations to the Board by March 1993. The Education Policy Study Committee developed a survey, which was sent through the districts, to be completed by its membership. Currently practicing teachers, and leaders in education and business throughout the state were interviewed. The committee members also immersed themselves in reading the many articles, reports and books necessary to gain a working knowledge of the pertinent issues.

The committee agreed early in its deliberations that the PTA's philosophy of education and equal educational opportunity for all children and youth combined with California's fiscal condition required a primary focus on these three questions:

- How can the public school system be changed to ensure that **all** students are given the same opportunity to achieve excellence?
- Are any new laws necessary to accomplish this?
- How can available dollars be used more effectively and efficiently?

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Of course, many other questions and concerns were involved in the study.

The committee was surprised to discover that **no new laws are necessary**. Everything needed to accomplish the goals implicit in the three main questions is already in place. The overriding question then was – **why isn't any of this happening?** The answers are many and complex, but as each of the interview respondents said, and as the survey replies and the literature showed, it is simply a matter of **a catalyst to make change happen**. And what is that catalyst? What PTA members have always known and worked toward – Parent and Community Action.

The California State PTA is firmly convinced that the changes necessary to create a true student-focused public school system can come only through parents and community members acting together to hold the schools accountable for student performance. The better use of education dollars can come about only if parents and community members unite in demanding a reordering of priorities in how funds are spent in their school districts and at their local schools.

Parents and community members must take collective action to ensure that each school provides a quality education for all its students. The California State PTA is committed to making every effort to assist PTA units, councils and districts to take the leadership role in making such action possible and effective.