

## SCHOOL FACILITIES AND PUBLIC PLANNING

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1991

*Reviewed by Board of Managers March 2012*

- WHEREAS, California State PTA believes every child in the state is entitled to a free, quality public education; and
- WHEREAS, California currently has the most crowded schools in the nation, with 40 of the 58 counties projecting enrollment increases of more than 20% over the next 10 years; and
- WHEREAS, California schools are facing a facilities crisis of unprecedented proportion due to the rapid growth in enrollment; and
- WHEREAS, A school district cannot meet the present and projected needs of its community's students without the cooperation of city and county governments in finding resources and space to build new schools; and
- WHEREAS, PTA believes that the facility needs of a school district must be considered wherever a land use decision is made, and that provision for schools must be included as a mandated element, along with parks, open space, streets and highways in the city/county general plan now required of all municipalities and counties in California; and
- WHEREAS, Some communities have acted to provide for public schools in their general plans as dictated by good public policy, requiring such provision as a condition for approval of any new development; and
- WHEREAS, The California State PTA has a number of position and resolutions supporting efforts to ensure adequate school facilities for California's students; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA seek and support legislation that would require public schools to be specified as a mandated element of the general plan currently required of every county and municipality in California; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to seek enactment of ordinances in their communities that would require the inclusion of adequate school facilities in all general plans.

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## BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The extent of the facilities crisis in California is well known. There is a severe shortage of classrooms throughout the state as a result of rapid growth in the school-aged population. Lack of good planning and sound public policy has worsened the problem. In one Riverside County community, the planning and zoning process permitted a school enrollment growth of 124% in just one year. With no change in the planning process, similar increases are predicted over the next several years.

Without the cooperation of city and county governments, a school district cannot hope to meet the needs of its community's future students. When a local housing development is approved, and families with children move into the new homes, there often is an impact on existing schools. Under current law, local communities are not required to consider the probable impact on school facilities when approving such developments. Local cities and counties must be required to consider the effect on school facilities as a factor.

The Coalition for Adequate School Housing (CASH) points out the obvious: additional development indeed creates the need for infrastructure such as roads, water, sewers and **schools**.

Without such requirements, which are part of the planning process for other infrastructure needs, communities are often forced to make tremendous efforts to exert enough pressure to gain even the most minimal concessions from developers as a condition of approval. Requiring cities and counties to include planning for adequate school facilities in their general plans would ensure that every student in California can attend a school free from overcrowding.