

SCHOOL TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IMPROVEMENT

(Adopted by Convention Delegates April 2001)

Reviewed by Board of Managers January 2010

- WHEREAS,** The California State PTA recognizes the importance of promoting school safety policies, educational outreach programs, and implementing traffic and pedestrian safety solutions for pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 school children, parents, and communities; and
- WHEREAS,** The need for traffic engineering, new safety technologies, education outreach, and the enforcement of safe driving laws are recognized by safety experts as vital to improving safe routes to and from schools by reducing hazards and increasing student, community, and motorist awareness; and
- WHEREAS,** Recent data show that California ranked 12th highest in the nation in child pedestrian vs. vehicle fatalities and serious injuries for children 5-12 years old, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Association states that 43% of school age pedestrian fatalities occur between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m.; and
- WHEREAS,** Safety studies have identified key school pedestrian and traffic safety issues including
- (1) unsafe routes to school,
 - (2) speeding/reckless driving in school zones,
 - (3) unsafe parking and drop-off/pick-up practices,
 - (4) school bus loading zone conflicts and double parking,
 - (5) unclear school area signs and crosswalks with low visual impact and recognition,
 - (6) poorly maintained/faded crosswalks and signs,
 - (7) utility construction and street/public works hazards,
 - (8) inadequate crossing guard program funding,
 - (9) lack of sustainable school safety education/staff training, and
 - (10) inconsistent enforcement and parking control intervention; and
- WHEREAS,** Inconsistent state and local safety policies, as well as ineffective safety procedures and school zone traffic signs/crosswalk markings, contribute to traffic and pedestrian safety risks for school children, and further reinforce the critical need for implementing comprehensive statewide school safety improvements, training programs, operational procedures, and legislation; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts urge the creation and implementation of school safety committees where none exist; and be it further

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RESOLVED, That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to participate with school safety committees and to work with parents, students, teachers, local law enforcement, other appropriate agencies, and their school communities to improve traffic and pedestrian safety for children, and identify and improve, where necessary, safe routes to and from schools; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts urge their superintendents, school boards, elected officials and other policy-makers to support local and state efforts to (1) reduce traffic and pedestrian safety problems/hazards for children, (2) increase motorist and pedestrian awareness by using the latest technological improvements (technologies) in signs, crosswalk design, pavement markings, and traffic control devices, and (3) implement policies in a systematic and uniform manner for all of California's schools to address traffic/pedestrian safety education and enforcement; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts urge state and local legislators and other policy-makers to support comprehensive improvements in traffic and pedestrian safety for pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 school children, and to create a safer environment for all of California's school children in partnership with schools, community organizations, city, state, and appropriate federal agencies; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts advocate and support legislation on the state and local level to double all traffic fines for moving violations within posted school zones—and further advocate that fine revenues be committed to school traffic safety/pedestrian programs, including crossing guards.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Major school safety policy reform and traffic engineering technology upgrades are needed to improve statewide and local approaches to traffic safety for pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 school children. Changes are needed in the areas of (1) local and school district operations and policy in the areas of school safety education, (2) traffic engineering, signs and control devices design, and (3) safety laws and enforcement.

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School Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Improvement – continued

The new technologies and design applications currently available have proven to be effective in increasing the visibility of pedestrians in school zones, as well as increasing motorist and pedestrian awareness of safety and compliance with traffic laws. These approaches are cost efficient and are effective in reducing pedestrian fatality and injury to school children and the community at large, when applied uniformly and maintained and reinforced with sustainable safety education and law enforcement.

Second District PTA's study, "PTA School Children's Traffic Safety Project 2000," and its plan of action and recommendations supported by their PTA community advisory group in participation with the City and County of San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Board of Education, Transportation Authority, Traffic Engineering Department, Police/California Highway Patrol, California State Automobile Association (AAA) and others, recommended action in the areas of safety education, traffic engineering, law enforcement and legislation. Many of these recommendations have been implemented.

The adoption of this resolution and a comprehensive plan of action for local school districts can result in increased motorist awareness, stronger visual impact of school zones and crossings, higher compliance with traffic laws through education and uniform enforcement, and could ultimately reduce the fatalities and injuries to California's pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 school children.

In the belief that the greatest gift to our children is a safer school and community environment, this resolution is dedicated to those school children who have been injured and lost their lives while walking to and from their schools over the years.