

**SELF-ESTEEM AND PERSONAL AND SOCIAL  
RESPONSIBILITY AWARENESS**

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1991

- WHEREAS,** PTA, since its inception, has been concerned that children and youth reach their fullest potential both physically and emotionally, that they develop a healthy personality, an abiding sense of personal worth, and that they achieve a purposeful and productive life; and
- WHEREAS,** The National PTA has recognized the importance of self-esteem and made it a priority in its work with the Keebler Company in developing the Self-Esteem Project, "Mirrors;" and
- WHEREAS,** In 1990, The California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility established that there is a significant correlation between low self-esteem and the major social concerns which plague our state and nation (crime, unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancies, educational failure and poverty); and
- WHEREAS,** The Task Force has documented that there are practical steps which can be taken to diminish these destructive patterns by nurturing healthy self-esteem and personal and social responsibility; and
- WHEREAS,** The family is first in importance in nurturing self-esteem and the schools are second in influencing high self-esteem and responsible behavior, and there are teaching strategies and curricula available which offer great assistance to faculties and parents; and, more than in any other single area of study, schools have demonstrated the all-encompassing importance of self-esteem; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That PTA intensify its efforts in promoting parental skills in developing self-esteem and personal and social responsibility for both parents and their children by urging units, councils and districts to hold workshops/classes, and sponsor special projects and programs; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That PTAs work in conjunction with school districts to ensure adoption of the promotion of self-esteem and personal and social responsibility for all children as clearly stated goals integrated into the total curriculum; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That course work in self-esteem be required for education-related credentials and as a part of ongoing in-service training for all educators and all adults working with children in schools.

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## BACKGROUND SUMMARY

In 1986, the California State Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law Assembly Bill 3659 (Chapter 1065 of the Statutes of 1986) creating the California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility (hereinafter referred to as The Task Force).

The Task Force in its findings confirms what we have learned in our educational reform efforts. Students whose lives are plagued by drugs, gangs and teen pregnancy need special attention. One of the keys to preventing their failure in school is helping them to develop a sense of purpose, feel part of a nurturing community and believe in themselves enough to be able to resist peer pressure. Appreciating self-worth is futile if it fails to foster responsible character and integrity in actions. An individual's character proceeds from a healthy sense of self and needs to be nourished.

The Task Force adopted as its official definition of "self-esteem" the following: "Appreciating my own worth and importance and having the character to be accountable for myself and to act responsibly toward others."

The Task Force came to the unanimous conviction that the family is the most crucial ingredient in nurturing the sense of self-esteem persons carry with them into life. Because parents are so crucial to self-esteem, steps need to be taken to assist them in fulfilling their critical tasks. The self-esteem of the parents themselves is one of the most crucial and essential elements. There is no fully adequate substitute for a loving family as the environment in which people learn to appreciate their own worth. There are, however, other important nurturing communities such as schools, churches and the workplace that can also provide support to help build integrity of character and self-esteem.

Since children spend so much of their time in school, the environment of that school plays a major role in the development of self-esteem. Schools that include self-esteem as a clearly stated component of their goals, policies and practices are more successful academically and more successful in developing healthy self-esteem. Every adult working at a school should feel responsible for every youngster in that school. Parents need assistance in becoming more effective partners in their child's education. And the entire community needs to recognize and understand the diverse needs of the student population.

As stated by Bill Honig, Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of California, "There is a critical link between competence and self-confidence; emotion and character development; and most important, successful strategies exist for promoting positive attitudes towards self and school."