Supporting Student Success

After over a year of remote learning (with some students coming back to the classroom recently), our teachers and students have done the best they can to make educational gains, align state standards to new learning modalities, and support all students under extremely difficult circumstances.

With students coming back to the classroom in the fall, connect with your student’s teacher to understand the learning goals, class expectations, and how you can best support your student in their education.

Here are some questions you can ask:
- What are the learning goals for my student this year?
- How can I help my child organize their time to be successful this school year?
- How much time outside of class will my student need for homework?
- How are my student’s learning considerations accounted for in your class (ex. Medical, IEP and/or 504 goals and accommodations)?
- How much time will student learning be computer based?
- How will students’ social-emotional health be addressed throughout the school day?
- Will there be opportunities for my child to study art and music this school year (it has been researched and documented that students that study the arts do better in their core curriculum)?

PTAs can invite the school principal and teachers to take part in their regularly scheduled (online for now) meetings where parents can hear about learning goals and curriculum focus areas. Did you know that schools have implemented a new approach to teaching science several years back, based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)? Arts education is also a great topic of discussion with school leaders. Become an active voice in the school-site council and LCAP development at your school.

Looking for activities to do with your student? California State PTAs new PTA Resource Library has a lot of great hands-on activities and learning links that can help you explore science and other subject areas with your student. [https://capta.org/resource-library/](https://capta.org/resource-library/)

FOR MORE INFORMATION
The California State PTA website has a full section devoted to Curriculum. There you’ll find information about the arts, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math), the Civic Mission of School, CTE and much more. [LINK: https://capta.org/focus-areas/education/curriculum/ ]
Measuring progress

Class assignments, tests and grades help teachers and parents understand how each individual child is doing. These measures look different from school to school and even from classroom to classroom. California has a statewide testing system that allows you to see how well your child is doing compared to the state’s expectations. The California Department of Education has introduced a new electronic report that makes it easy to look up student scores and understand what they mean. The state has also created a website designed for parents called Starting Smarter. [LINK: https://ca.startingsmarter.org/]

PTAs can use meetings, newsletters, and social media to make sure parents know how to find these resources. At your unit meetings you can also address questions related to how your school is doing overall. The CA School Dashboard summarizes results across a broad set of measures in order to help community members and educators evaluate how well local schools and districts are meeting some common goals and to see clearly where improvement is needed. At www.caschooldashboard.org you can look up any school or district in the state and you’ll also find some great videos and other resources to guide conversations surrounding school accountability.

What you find on the California School Dashboard is just the beginning of the conversation. PTA units and councils throughout California are creating many different kinds of forums for conversations about how these indicators are measured and how schools across a district differ in terms of their results. Your PTA could try one or more of these:
- Using Ed100.org for short meeting topics
- Meet with other parent leaders, at other schools, to compare notes
- Have a subcommittee that works closely with the School Site Council or have a Site Council update on your agenda
- Put a discussion of your school’s Dashboard results on a PTA meeting agenda, and ask your principal to explain the school plans related to the local indicator topics

To learn more

Go to www.CAPTA.org, under “Focus Areas.”
- “Education” subjects include: Curriculum (Arts, STEAM, CTE and more), Common Core, Student Assessments, Summer/Extended Learning, Special Needs, Homework, Every Student Succeeds Act and School Finance.
- “LCFF/LCAP” subjects include Accountability Plans, Priority Areas, and Dashboard.
- “Distance Learning Resources” resources that can support learning at home
- “Next Gen Science” information about NGSS
- “ed100” explore the education system in easy-to-understand language