Advocacy

“The necessity for securing adequate legislation was apparent from the start.” While studying how best to raise their own children, the association’s founders discovered that other children had serious unmet needs. They saw sickly children, insufficiently clad children, hungry children. And something had to be done about it. (Excerpted from History of the California Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc., 1900-1944, M.H. Strong, Editor.)

Decisions that affect our children, youth, and families are made every day by local, state, and national policymakers. In a democratic society, every citizen has the right and the responsibility to participate in shaping those decisions. These advocacy tools have been developed to assist you in your efforts to influence policymakers at the local, state, and national levels.

As the oldest and largest advocacy organization in California, PTA is uniquely qualified to influence policymakers. By working collaboratively on issues, PTAs in California and throughout the nation can form a powerful force in securing adequate laws and public policy that are best for the care and protection of children and youth.

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Local Advocacy

Local PTA Advocacy for Children and Youth

Laws enacted by local, state and national bodies are primary sources of public policy. Securing adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth is one of the purposes of the organization. Therefore, PTA maintains an active legislation program.

PTAs can and must participate actively in the process through which public policy decisions are made. Any unit, council or district PTA may recommend action on legislation to the California State PTA Board of Managers.

Unit, council and district PTAs are responsible for taking action on local issues originating in school districts, cities, regions, or counties.

For details on the responsibilities of the legislation chairman see “Job Description for Legislation,” Chapter.

**advocate**: To plead in favor of; defend; support or urge by argument; recommend publicly. One who pleads for or on behalf of another.

Study the Issues

Check to see if California State PTA already has taken a position regarding your concern or a closely related issue. The Legislation Platform, Resolutions, Position Statements and Issue-Related Guidelines of California State PTA provide the basis for advocacy on issues at all levels. For information on California State PTA positions, see

- Legislation Platform (preamble, general principles and legislation planks)
- Where We Stand: Resolutions
- Where We Stand: Position Statements
- Where We Stand: Issue-Related Guidelines

PTAs cannot advocate in the name of PTA without prior PTA authority.

If there is an adopted PTA position on an issue, that position can be used as authority to advocate in the name of PTA.

If there is no prior adopted PTA position on record, the next step is to conduct a study (How to Make a Study). Your council or district PTA can provide assistance.

Present the results of the study to your members. They may vote to accept the recommendations of the study and to forward them through channels (unit to council [if in council], council to district PTA) to California State PTA. Background information and recommendations will be reviewed at each level before a vote is taken to forward the study to the next level. The unit, council and district PTA should report to each other on any action taken.

When the study and recommendations reach the California State PTA Board of Managers, they will be referred to the commission or committee responsible for the subject matter. This commission or committee may choose to prepare a position statement or resolution to present to the California State PTA Board of Managers for final action. Any action taken by California State PTA will be reported to the local unit, council or district PTA.

The California State PTA Board of Managers may also decide to return the study to the originator to take action on the study and recommendations. If this is the case, the local unit, council or district PTA may decide to prepare and submit a resolution on this issue for consideration by delegates to the annual convention in accordance with the procedure and timeline described in the Resolution Process (Resolution Process).

Statewide and Federal Issues

When considering advocacy on a statewide or federal issue at the local level, the first step is to determine if California State PTA or National PTA has considered the issue and whether or not either has a position. If not, research the issue and know the pros and cons. Identify the bill number, title and sponsor(s), or the number and name of the ballot measure. Remember to personalize the issue by preparing arguments on how the bill or ballot measure will affect your local community.

Know the different groups that support and oppose PTA’s position on the issue. Be an information resource and have available the following:

- Fact sheets that include background on the issue;
- A summary of the legislative proposal;
- An analysis of the bill;
- Facts and statistics that support PTA’s position; and
- Surveys or opinion polls of PTA members.

Some of this information may be available through the office of the legislator sponsoring the legislation. In the case of a statewide ballot measure on which California State PTA has taken a position, California State PTA will provide an analysis of the measure, including both pro and con arguments, and resources for further study. The California State PTA legislation team is available to consult with members on legislation and/or ballot measure issues.

Communicate with Your Elected Officials

Promote legislative advocacy among fellow PTA members by encouraging them to build relationships with state and federal representatives. Begin by identifying the State Senator, Assembly member and Member of Congress who represent your area. Find out more about legislators and their particular areas of interest by visiting their websites; individual websites can be accessed at www.senate.ca.gov or www.assembly.ca.gov, www.house.gov or www.senate.gov.

For local issues, identify the appropriate school board members, city council members, county supervisors...
and/or county school board representatives that you will need to reach. Contact information may be found in your local telephone directory or on the websites for each local government body.

**Visit Your Legislators**

Make an appointment to visit your state and federal legislative representatives at least once per year. Call their district offices to find out when they will be available; many state legislators spend Fridays in their district offices. Arrange for a group of PTA members to visit and share information about what is important to students and parents in your area; include students when they are available.

When visiting your elected representative, take the following steps:

- Schedule an appointment or, if the elected representative is unavailable, arrange a meeting with the aide handling the issue. When making the appointment, specify how much time will be needed.
- Draft an agenda and be sure to list the issue(s) the PTA wants to discuss. If PTA members are visiting as a group, assign each person a role. For example, one person can open the meeting, another person can be the recorder, someone else can focus the conversation back to the PTA agenda when necessary, and another person can leave literature.
- Arrive on time for the meeting. Have the group meet together immediately prior to the meeting and then go in together. Once in the meeting, immediately identify yourself and the PTA represented. During the introduction, state the issue(s) of concern. Keep the time frame in mind during the meeting.
- Be prepared to educate the legislator or aide about PTA's history and positions. Be open to questions. If you don't know the answer, politely explain that you will do some additional research and get back to them. Never give false information or assumptions. Personal credibility and the credibility of PTA are on the line.
- Ask how the legislator will vote on the issue. If the legislator is unable to make a commitment, tactfully state that you would like to know, and that you are willing to call at a later time to learn the decision. If the response is positive, respond, "We appreciate your support." If the response is negative, ask, "What are your specific objections?"
- Develop a positive relationship with elected representatives and their staff members. Communication should be a continuing exchange, not sporadic contact. A solid relationship with legislators and their staff members is an important step in building credibility and power for the PTA.

**Write Letters**

Letters alert elected representatives to PTA's views. A letter-writing campaign also educates PTA members about the issues and publicizes the association. Begin the campaign by identifying a coordinator, perhaps the legislation chairman or PTA president.

Determine the message. Have sample messages available to members, as well as fact sheets with the PTA position on the issue. When authorized to write on behalf of the PTA, use PTA letterhead. State the case succinctly and accurately, citing the following:

- Issue and background facts;
- PTA's position, and what PTA wants to happen (e.g., change in regulations, new legislation);
- Number of PTA members the writer represents; and
- Your involvement with the PTA and, when applicable, your PTA title (e.g., unit, council or district PTA president).

- Address the letter with proper titles; and
- Sign your full name and give your complete address, including telephone number.

Send copies of the letter to other contacts, such as key legislative committee and subcommittee members as well as the California State PTA director of legislation and, when writing about issues before Congress, to the National PTA Office of Governmental Relations.

It may also be helpful, in some cases, to send letters to the editors of local newspapers to communicate the PTA position on a particular issue to the broader community. The letter should be submitted on PTA letterhead and signed by the president or legislation chair of the unit, council or district PTA initiating the action.

**Addresses of California’s State and National Elected Officials**

The Honorable (name)
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable (name)
California State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable (name)
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable (name)
United States Senator
Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable (name)
United States House of Representatives
House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

For more tips on organizing a letter-writing campaign, see Figure A-1.

**Faxes**

For messages that are time sensitive, faxes are a quick, effective method for making a PTA position known in writing. Most legislative offices have publicly listed fax numbers. Refer to Write Letters when composing the fax.
Electronic Mail (email)

Email is another way to communicate PTA positions on legislation. Some elected representatives may not accept email attachments. Check with their offices about their email preferences before encouraging your members to email a particular representative. Refer to Write Letters when composing email.

Telephone

Phone calls are also an effective communication strategy, particularly when timing is critical. When an elected representative’s support or vote is needed within the next 48 hours, a phone call to the legislator may be the best method of communication. Use the phone to communicate PTA views. Phone the elected representative’s district or Capitol office and request to speak with the member or an aide. Be prepared to:

- State your name and identify your PTA.
- Identify the bill number or the issue.
- State that you are from the legislator’s district, and explain the PTA position on the issue.
- Ask how the legislator expects to vote.
- Urge the legislator to vote for the PTA position.

Reaching Your Members

PTA members may receive the California State PTA Legislative Alerts by signing up to receive them at capta.org (click the Legislative Alerts’ button). E-mail distribution lists and telephone trees are effective ways to mobilize many people on a particular issue. When the state president and/or the director of legislation receive information on an important issue, they may pass it on to local legislation chairmen who, in turn, can reach other PTA members in their communities.

Through the use of email distribution lists and telephone trees, within a few hours of a legislative alert or call to action, literally hundreds of letters, postcards, phone calls, faxes or email messages can be on their way to appropriate legislators.

Letters or faxes are best when time permits, but often we must react fast enough for legislators to feel the impact of the PTA lobby within hours.

PTA e-mail distribution lists and telephone trees must only be used to share adopted PTA positions and must never be used in candidate elections.

Establishing an Email Distribution List or Telephone Tree

Email Distribution List – Collect e-mail addresses from members within your PTA who are willing to act. Use these addresses to create an email distribution list. One message can be sent to the entire list, and members can forward it on accordingly. Provide a method for subscribers to unsubscribe from future email alerts if they choose. The legislation chairman and the PTA president are responsible for email accuracy and content. Email legislative alerts or calls to action sent by National PTA or California State PTA can be forwarded without local approval. PTA presidents must approve locally generated legislative emails before distribution to local members.

Telephone Tree – Create a list of names and phone numbers of PTA members within your local area who are willing to take action.

Establish the calling sequence. Select “lead” callers. A lead caller should make no more than five calls.

Last caller in sequence should return a call to a “lead” caller.

If there is no answer after several tries, the caller should go on to next in sequence.

Do not count on answering machines to deliver messages in a timely manner.

Distribute a copy of the entire telephone tree to all involved. Duplicate and distribute legislation materials from California State PTA, the council (if in council) and district PTA.

Tips on Effective Communication Using Email Distribution Lists and Telephone Trees

Have a system to check the effectiveness of email distribution list or telephone tree communications. Is the list or tree functioning efficiently? Are there problems needing adjustment?

Send emails or make your calls to legislators before using your email distribution list or activating the telephone tree. Your personal experience in communicating the message will alert you to any problems with the way you are presenting the message.

Make a list of “talking points,” messages you want your PTA members to communicate to their legislators. Include bill number, author, subject matter, location of bill in the legislative process and the PTA position.

It is important that the same message is delivered each time.

By using an email distribution list or activating a telephone tree, the PTA unit can dramatically increase the number of contacts with legislators. It is important they hear from PTA. Legislators need to be reminded about priority issues.

Update email distribution list addresses and telephone tree phone numbers frequently. Explore ways to expand your email list.

PTAs are encouraged to explore other media communication tools such as texting, social networking sites or blogging, considering PTA publication guidelines.

Follow-up

Following action on a bill, send the legislator your thanks via email, postal service or fax if the vote or action was favorable, or a polite expression of disappointment if the legislator voted against the PTA position. Appreciation can be expressed in other, more public ways as well, such as writing letters to the editor of the local paper. Keep the PTA name visible.
Public Appearances

Another method of bringing attention to issues of concern to your local unit, council or district PTA is to schedule public appearances of PTA representatives. Appropriate forums may include regular meetings of the local school board, chamber of commerce, or service clubs such as Rotary or Kiwanis. These venues provide an opportunity for an authorized representative of the PTA unit, council or district to share the PTA position on particular issue(s) of concern with other community members.

Organize a Rally

To raise awareness and engage your members in a particular issue, you may wish to organize a local rally. Invite elected officials and other experts to speak, as well as the press. For more information on holding a rally, see Figure A-2.

California State PTA Legislative Program

California State PTA action on legislation is aimed primarily at the state government level and on ballot measures that appear on statewide election ballots. The California State PTA Board of Managers is responsible for action on state legislation and state ballot measures.

California State PTA also works with the National PTA in implementing the PTA advocacy program at the federal level.

PTA Legislation Team

The legislation team includes the director of legislation and legislative advocates, who specialize in specific issues regarding education, family engagement, budget, community concerns, and health, as these affect children and youth, as well as a federal advocate. All members of the legislation team are PTA volunteers who serve on the California State PTA Board of Managers.

The director of legislation manages the California State PTA legislation program and works on bills that do not fit into one of the subject matter categories. These include matters such as taxation and budgetary reform.

The advocates work directly with state legislators and their staffs; with members of allied organizations; and with other interested parties on bills selected for PTA advocacy.

Commissions are responsible for preparing background information and authority for bills in their subject matter area and for recommending appropriate action. Advocates select bills that are sent to members of the legislation action committee for detailed study.

The legislation action committee meets several times each year during the legislative session to discuss the bills and subject matter commission recommendations and to determine positions to be taken on each of the selected bills. After the committee meets, a Legislation Action Report is prepared and distributed. Current status on legislation for which PTA has taken positions can be viewed in the Advocacy Chapter of the California State PTA website (Current Legislation).

Once a position has been adopted, the legislation team is responsible for all further actions on the legislation. This includes relaying information on PTA positions to legislators and communicating PTA action on legislation-related matters to the constituent associations of California State PTA.

Legislation Program

The PTA membership, through the association’s bylaws and the actions of delegates at California State PTA conventions, directs PTA actions on legislation. The California State PTA Board of Managers is responsible for conducting the affairs of the association. This includes all action on state legislation and state ballot measures. Specific activities include:

- Analyze legislation under consideration in the California Legislature and measures that will appear on statewide election ballots.
- Take PTA positions on specific bills and ballot measures as directed by the PTA legislation platform, policies, resolutions and position statements.
- Advocate for passage or defeat of selected measures.
- Work cooperatively with allied organizations or others concerned about children’s issues when appropriate.
- Inform members about PTA positions on current legislation and on statewide ballot measures, and encourage local actions when needed.

PTA follows IRS and California Fair Political Practices Commission rules on advocacy.

Action on Legislation

Action on Legislation is an integral part of PTA work. California State PTA action on legislation and ballot measures is based on the legislation platform, California State PTA position statements, and California State PTA and National PTA resolutions. The National PTA and California State PTA, as advocates for children and youth, carry out an active, effective legislation program.

Authority for PTA Action on Legislation

The California State PTA legislation platform lays the specific framework for PTA action on legislation. The platform, adopted every two years (even-numbered years) by delegates at the California State PTA Convention, establishes authority and direction for deciding what measures PTA should select for action on legislation. It defines the fields of PTA interest and the scope of legislation appropriate for PTA action.

California State PTA legislation policies, adopted every two years (odd-numbered years) by California State PTA Convention delegates, guide how action on legislation may be taken by California State PTA and its unit, council and district PTAs. Procedures are adopted by the California State PTA Board of Managers.
The California State PTA legislation platform and policies direct that legislation and ballot measures selected for action by California State PTA must:

- affect the education, health, and well-being of California’s children and youth;
- be of statewide significance; and
- fit within the Purposes of the PTA association and the framework of the legislation platform and be consistent with recorded PTA positions.

Sources of authority and direction for specific PTA positions on legislative bills and statewide ballot measures include:

- Resolutions adopted by California State PTA convention delegates;
- The legislation platform principles and planks;
- Position statements and resolutions adopted by the California State PTA Board of Managers;
- National PTA resolutions;
- National PTA Board of Directors position statements and legislative directives;
- Previous PTA action on the issues; and
- Purposes of the PTA.

California State PTA Legislative Bill Positions

For legislative bills that have significant impact on children and youth, and that fall within the framework of the legislation platform, priorities, and current PTA positions, California State PTA may adopt one of the following bill positions:

Support: Legislation considered to be of great importance and beneficial to the welfare of children and youth. Will work actively to seek passage of these bills.

Oppose: Legislation considered to be very harmful to the welfare of children and youth. Will work actively to seek defeat of these bills.

Oppose Unless Amended: Legislation that contains some provisions in conflict with established PTA positions. The California State PTA legislative advocate will work with the bill’s author to amend the bill. If the bill is amended so that it no longer is objectionable, PTA will change its position.

Support if Amended: Legislation PTA would support, except that it contains a part (or parts) PTA would like changed. If the bill is amended to accommodate the PTA concern or recommendations, California State PTA will work to secure its passage.

Seek Amendments: Legislation that addresses an important PTA issue, but which would require amendments to receive full support or removal of opposition from the PTA. Legislative advocate(s) will work with the author and with allied organizations to secure appropriate changes.

Approve: Legislation that PTA could support but does not actively seek passage of because the bill is not currently a high priority for PTA action or does not need active support from California State PTA.

Watch: Legislation that could be important, but the bill is not complete or the author intends to work further on the bill through amendments. PTA chooses to monitor the progress of the bill. Future amendments to the bill could result in PTA taking an active position.

When a bill has been amended so that the content is changed significantly, the bill is re-examined to determine if the content is still appropriate for PTA action on legislation, and whether a change in position is warranted. If the content is no longer within the scope of PTA action on legislation, the PTA position is dropped.

Positions on State Initiatives and Propositions

Support: The initiative is considered to be of great importance and beneficial to the welfare of children and youth. Will work actively to seek passage of it.

Oppose: The initiative is considered to be very harmful to the welfare of children and youth and is in conflict with the Purposes of the PTA. Will work actively to seek defeat of the initiative.

Neutral: The initiative may be relevant to the welfare of children and youth, but after careful analysis, California State PTA has chosen to neither support nor oppose this particular initiative due to either lack of existing specific authority or conflicting authorities. Will not support or oppose passage of the initiative.

Legislation Platform

Presented to convention delegates for adoption in even-numbered years.

Adopted May 2016

Preamble

The legislation program of the California Congress of Parents, Teachers, and Students, Inc., is derived from the work of the PTA in home, school, and community. PTA efforts “to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth” are based on recognition of the home as the foundation of our society, the responsibility of the PTA for parent education, the appreciation of our national heritage, the observance and understanding of the rights and obligations of responsible citizenship, and the realization that maintaining a free and public education system is the cornerstone of democracy.

General Principles

General Principles for Consideration of Proposed Legislation

1. Equal justice, equal privileges, equal opportunities, and equal responsibilities in every phase of life for all children and youth, while recognizing that each child is unique with individual needs and talents.
2. High standards for those who work in all areas concerned with children and youth.

3. Effective governance systems and practices that place a high priority on the needs of children and youth.

4. Coordination and planning by all agencies with clear definition of responsibility at each level of government.

5. Establishment of and adherence to fiscal responsibility in government, with concern for fair taxation, but keeping priorities for the needs of all children and youth foremost.

6. Adherence to strict ethical practices in political campaigns and at all levels of government.

7. Strong and broadly based tax structures at state and local levels.

8. Budgets and financial support to provide needed public services for all children and youth with the continued constitutional guarantee of financial support for public schools as the first claim on all state revenues in the general fund.

9. Maximum local control when it serves the best interest of all children and youth.

**Legislation Planks**

California State PTA will support legislation:

1. To provide the most comprehensive and diversified education possible for all children, youth and adults: education that will achieve quality and excellence, encourage maximum individual development and provide equal educational opportunity for each student, with particular focus on eliminating the achievement gap.

2. To secure financing for public education that will be sufficient to provide optimum educational opportunity for all students, including state aid to school districts for building purposes as well as state funds to cover excess costs of all programs mandated by the Legislature.

3. To attain quality counseling and guidance services, school health services and library services, provided by credentialed personnel at all educational levels.

4. To ensure pre-service and in-service teacher preparation programs, remuneration, supportive services and professional development designed to attract and retain qualified men and women in the teaching profession.

5. To provide guidelines for assessing competence in the teaching profession, and to provide for due process in dismissal procedures.

6. To encourage state, county, regional, and local school district organizations and public educational governance structures that effectively serve the needs of all students and maximize efficient delivery of services.

7. To include parents/guardians in decisions that affect the education and well-being of their children, and to promote their involvement in their children’s education and schools.

8. To give students the skills they need to become effective citizens and parents.

9. To protect and improve the health of all families through the prevention, treatment and control of disease.

10. To extend and improve physical and mental health services and facilities, including rehabilitation.

11. To protect families from unsafe, impure or ineffective drugs, foods, medical devices and cosmetics.

12. To prevent, control or eliminate hazards to the health, safety and well-being of all children and youth.

13. To require state and local government to publicize and disseminate information regarding issues affecting the public’s well-being.

14. To provide effective community services and facilities for all children, youth and adults, directed toward the well-being of the family.

15. To promote public policy that contributes to the stability of families and to the adequate physical, emotional and financial support of children and youth.

16. To provide services and facilities for the care, protection and treatment of abused, dependent, neglected or abandoned children and youth.

17. To secure specialized programs for the prevention of crimes and misdemeanors committed by juveniles.

18. To provide adequate facilities and services for the treatment, education and rehabilitation of juvenile offenders.

19. To promote public policies that protect and conserve natural resources and provide a quality environment for present and future generations.

20. To improve governance systems and practices in order to effectively serve the needs of children and youth.

21. To support the needs of vulnerable children in all aspects of their lives.

**California State PTA Legislation Policies and Procedures**

*Adopted May 2017*

Policies are presented to convention delegates for adoption in odd-numbered years.

Procedures are adopted by California State PTA Board of Managers.

Policies are italicized; procedures are not italicized.

A legislative measure is considered to include bills (state and federal), legislative ballot measures (statutory, constitutional amendments placed on the ballot by the
legislature), proposed statewide initiative petitions, and initiatives that have qualified for the statewide ballot.

**POLICY 1**

*California State PTA is responsible for taking action on state and federal legislative measures, and proposed or qualified statewide ballot measures.*

Until the California State PTA Board of Managers has taken a position on a state issue or specifically declines to take a position, support or opposition should not be expressed in the name of PTA.

A legislation action committee is authorized to act on behalf of the State Board of Managers when taking positions on legislative bills. Such action must conform to established PTA positions and must be reported immediately to the California State PTA Board of Managers. The legislation action committee shall include, but not be limited to, the president, president-elect, director of legislation, legislation advocates, two district PTA presidents, the chairman, and one other member of each commission on community concerns, education, health, family engagement, and others as appointed by the president.

The Legislation Action Committee is also authorized to take action on statewide ballot measures when there will be no meeting of the State Board of Managers between the date the measure qualifies for the ballot and the date of the election. Action taken on ballot measures by this committee is subject to concurrence by the Board of Directors.

In order to maintain a strong united position, contacts to legislators in the name of PTA shall be made by persons authorized by the State Board of Managers or by unit, council and district PTAs and their members.

**POLICY 2**

*Legislative measures selected for action by California State PTA must be of statewide significance, fit within both the Purposes of the PTA and the legislation platform adopted by the convention delegates, as well as other relevant PTA authorities.*

A measure is considered to be a proposed bill in the Legislature, a proposed statewide initiative petition, or a proposition that has qualified for the statewide ballot.

In selecting measures for action, the California State PTA Board of Managers shall consider:

- Studies made by the California State PTA Board of Managers and by units, councils and district PTAs, with supporting information;
- Position statements adopted by the California State PTA Board of Managers;
- Membership opinion as reported by the district PTA presidents;
- Resolutions adopted by the delegates at annual State conventions;
- Information from authoritative and professional sources;
- Historical positions on bills with the same subject matter or intent; and
- National PTA positions consistent with current California State PTA positions.

**POLICY 3**

*Any position on legislative measures adopted by California State PTA remains in effect, unless, after subsequent review, new action is deemed warranted, and is adopted according to California State PTA procedures.*

When action on state or federal legislation is required between meetings of the legislation action committee, or when a bill has been amended to the extent that an existing position needs to be changed, such action may taken by an interim committee. This committee consists of the president, president-elect, director of legislation, and appropriate subject matter vice president and the advocate who will manage the bill.

When these situations occur, the advocate managing the bill shall contact the subject matter commission vice president. If he or she concurs that an immediate decision is warranted, and the director of legislation agrees, an interim committee meeting shall be called.

Any such action(s) must be ratified at the next regular meeting of the legislation action committee.

**POLICY 4**

*All positions on legislative measures taken by California State PTA shall be posted on the association’s website in a timely manner.*

When positions are adopted on state legislative bills by the legislation action committee:

- The positions shall be made available via an electronic information alert to all subscribers, including the district PTA presidents and other members of the Board of Managers.
- Positions on legislative bills shall be maintained and displayed on the California State PTA website.

When positions are adopted on state ballot measures:

- The rationale for California State PTA Board of Managers’ action shall be prepared by the California State PTA Board of Managers, posted on the website and distributed to unit, council and district PTAs for distribution to their members;

**POLICY 5**

*A unit, council, or district PTA with an interest in a proposed or qualified statewide ballot measure, which pertains to the welfare of children and youth, must determine whether California State PTA is studying or has taken action, before considering any action locally. Action may be taken locally by following PTA’s standard procedure for making a study.*

The issue or ballot measure must fit within the Purposes of PTA and the California State PTA legislation platform, adhere to PTA policies, and affect the well-being of children and youth.

Before a unit, council or district PTA takes a position on a statewide measure, a study, including information from all sides of the issue, shall be conducted. Authorities to
take a position (as described in Policy 2) must be documented in the study.

Before taking action, the unit, council or district PTA must take a vote at an association meeting and record the results in the minutes. Adopted positions on statewide ballot measures must be communicated to California State PTA.

When no action is planned and information only is being presented to membership, both sides of the issue must be provided.

**POLICY 6**

Any California State PTA action on legislative measures represents the official position of the organization and shall not be interpreted as representing the personal opinion or conviction of every individual PTA member.

**POLICY 7**

Unit, council and district PTAs are encouraged to promote adopted California State PTA positions on legislative measures and may be requested to actively support them, which does not require a local vote affirming the state position. While unit, council and district PTAs are not required to work actively for any position, they should not officially oppose a stand taken by California State PTA. Disagreement with a position on legislative measures should be communicated to California State PTA through regular channels, with a report of the extent of — and reasons for — the disagreement, including supporting PTA authorities.

Unit, council, district PTAs, or executive boards need not vote to affirm a California State PTA position in order to support the position.

When reporting a position of the California State PTA, a unit, council or district PTA may also inform the membership of opposing views.

If a unit, council or district PTA desires to express disapproval of an adopted California State PTA Board position on legislation to the California State PTA Board of Managers, a study of both sides of the issue should be made by the disagreeing group, and results of the study (with supporting material) should be forwarded to the California State PTA Board of Managers.

A current or former PTA officer/board member must not use his/her title, the name of the PTA or the trademark of PTA to take action in opposition to the official PTA position.

**POLICY 8**

Any unit, council or district PTA may request that California State PTA consider taking action on a legislative measure.

Proposals shall indicate the source of the recommendation.

Approved proposals from units and councils first shall be forwarded to the district PTA.

Each proposal should be accompanied by background information and the reasons for the recommendation.

**POLICY 9**

A district, council or unit PTA may wish to take action on a state legislative measure that affects only its local or regional area. The district PTA affected must inform California State PTA before taking a position.

The measure must have serious implications for children and youth within that local or regional area.

The measure must fit within the Purposes of PTA and the legislation platform.

After a position has been taken, the district PTA shall report that action to the director of legislation.

Any advocacy of the district PTA’s position is the responsibility of the district PTA and must be preceded or accompanied by a statement making it clear that the district PTA spokesman represents a PTA area, and is not speaking for California State PTA.

The district PTAs concerned must accept complete responsibility for communicating their positions on legislation, their actions, and the results to their membership in a timely manner.

Before taking a position on any measure, the district PTA must take a vote of the district PTA at an association meeting.

**POLICY 10**

Unit, council and district PTAs may take action on local issues originating in school districts, cities, regions, or counties, if such action fits within both the Purposes of PTA and legislation platform, adopted by convention delegates, is supported by PTA authorities, adheres to PTA policies, and affects the well-being of children and youth.

The proposed issue shall be carefully studied in order to determine the need for it and to understand its provisions and probable results.

A unit should consult the council, a council should consult the district PTA for advice and coordination of efforts and the district PTA president should be informed of any projected study by a unit or council.

All of the PTA units within a council affected by the issue must be informed and a majority of the units within the council must vote in agreement on the proposed action. This can be accomplished by a vote of a quorum of the authorized unit voting delegates and council board members.

All of the councils and out-of-council units within a district PTA affected by the issue must be informed, and a majority of the councils within the district PTA must vote in agreement on the proposed action.

**POLICY 11**

Informational (non-advocacy) material on PTA positions related to legislative issues, including local or statewide ballot measures, may be sent home with students, in compliance with local school district policies and procedures.*

*State law requires school districts to adopt policies regarding sending material home with students.
Only informational materials on legislative issues may be distributed via the students. Informational materials must provide "a fair and impartial presentation of relevant facts to aid the electorate in reaching an informed judgment regarding the bond issue or ballot measure." (See California Education Code, Section 7054 (b)(2).) Note that a statement of California State PTA's position on an issue is, in itself, informational.

Advocacy materials provide biased information about the issues and often tell the voter how to vote on a specific issue. This information must never be sent home with students, and PTAs must find alternative methods of distribution.

If there is a question regarding whether legislative material constitutes advocacy or is informational, consult the district PTA president or the appropriate school district personnel.

The school district designated administrator must authorize in writing the distribution of all legislative material considered to be informational before it can be sent home with students or electronically posted on a school website.

It is also important to comply with local school district policies on sending materials home with students.

It is in the best interest of a PTA unit to maintain a file of all legislative materials distributed via students. The file should include a copy of every piece of legislation material with the appropriate written authorization for distribution.

**Election Campaigns and the Role of the PTA**

Any use of the California State PTA name for electoral activity requires prior authorization from California State PTA. No activity engaged in by any unit, council or district PTA should suggest or imply the support of the National PTA or California State PTA (Nonpartisan Policy, Running Your PTA Chapter; Policy 9, Advocacy Chapter).

PTAs may not directly or indirectly participate or intervene in political campaigns on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office since this activity can endanger the PTA’s nonprofit status.

**Restrictions on Endorsement of Candidates**

PTAs, as tax-exempt associations, cannot support or oppose political parties or candidates, including those running for school boards and other nonpartisan offices. Participation in these types of activities will endanger the association’s nonprofit status with the IRS (Nonpartisan Policy, Running Your PTA Chapter).

A current or former PTA board member must not use his/her PTA title or the name of the PTA to endorse a candidate even if just for purposes of identification in any print, electronic, or website candidate literature, or interview or letter to the editor.

Judgment should be exercised by PTA leaders on whether privately endorsing a candidate (without using a PTA title) could negatively affect a future relationship with the elected official should a different winning candidate win.

For the purpose of this policy, all elections involving candidates are defined as partisan elections, even those for “nonpartisan” offices, such as school board or city council. Use of a PTA’s name or the PTA trademark with participation in any partisan activity will endanger PTA’s nonprofit status.

PTA members are not prohibited from running for public office themselves nor from listing PTA involvement as part of their biographical information and/or campaign literature.

Individual candidates cannot be invited to address PTA meetings, even if they are PTA members, unless all other candidates are invited. This avoids the reality or appearance of bias or support of an individual candidate. There is no restriction on a member who is running for office from performing his or her regular PTA duties. He or she just needs to be mindful to keep PTA and campaign activities separate.

**Local Candidates Forum**

Since the decisions of elected officials significantly affect the well-being of children and youth, it is a PTA responsibility to disseminate as much factual, objective information as possible during election campaigns to help voters make informed choices. All voters should be encouraged to carefully evaluate each official candidate. Candidates forums provide one way to provide such information in a nonpartisan, impartial, educational environment.

PTA never supports nor opposes a candidate for public/political office, but does take positions on issues that affect children and youth.

For more information on holding a local candidates forum, see Figure A-3.

**Candidate Questionnaires**

In addition to, or in place of, a candidates forum, another means of educating voters about candidates, is to send them a list of questions about key issues. Questioning all candidates during an election campaign is in compliance with the National PTA nonpartisan policy (Nonpartisan Policy, Running Your PTA Chapter).

Your PTA may wish to develop a list of questions to send to all candidates, and publish their responses in their entirety in unit, council and district PTA newsletters, adhering to school district policies for distribution.

Do not edit any of the responses. One may, however, request that responses be limited to a certain number of words, to ensure all responses are of similar length.

Questionnaires must be sent by certified mail with return receipt requested to all candidates; these receipts...
should be retained for one year after the election. Specific due dates must be set and included with the questionnaires. Any candidates not responding by the due date will not be included and should be so noted in the published materials.

**School Bonds and Other Ballot Measure Campaigns**

PTAs may be asked to help secure the passage of a local school district facilities bond or local parcel tax election, or to participate in campaigns to pass or defeat other ballot measures. Unit, council and district PTAs may participate in these efforts when the board and/or membership has studied the issue and voted to support such a campaign.

PTAs can be most effective by:

- Participating on the school district committee to recommend to the board of education the feasibility of placing a facilities bond or parcel tax on the local ballot, and what provisions the measure should include.
- Taking an active role in planning and running the campaign.
- Providing speakers to inform the community.
- Developing and/or distributing available campaign material – but not by using student help, unless permitted by the school district (California State PTA Legislation Policies and Procedure No. 11).
- Making use of radio, TV, and print media, including newsletters, editorial board visits, letters to the editor, and other communication resources such as PTA email and Web pages.

**Legal Guidelines for Campaign Activity**

California State PTA and all of its constituent associations are classified as tax-exempt nonprofit associations under the federal Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). State and federal laws place certain requirements and restrictions on lobbying and election-related activities and expenditures by such associations. A PTA that participates in influencing or attempting to influence specific legislation or voter action for the passage or defeat of any ballot measure must comply with both the federal IRS regulations and the California state laws and reporting requirements.

**IRS Regulations:** To retain its IRS tax-exempt status and continue to receive tax-deductible contributions, a PTA may not participate in any type of political campaign or other activity on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for any public office. Nor may a PTA devote more than an insubstantial part of its activities and budget to influence legislation. The "insubstantial part" is not clearly defined, but is generally interpreted to be no more than 5 percent of an organization’s annual operating expenditures.

The IRS provides another option for PTAs that choose to be more active in legislative matters. PTAs may elect 501(h) status, while retaining their 501(c)(3) status, by filing IRS Form 5768, “Election/Revocation of Election by an Eligible 501(c)(3) Organization to Make Expenditures to Influence Legislation.” This single page form can be found at www.irs.gov. Prior to electing 501(h) status, PTAs are advised to see legal and taxation professional advice.

Under the 501(h) designation, the amount of allowable lobbying expenditures is more clearly defined. For an organization with annual expenditures of $500,000 or less, the allowable expenditure on lobbying activities is 20 percent of its total annual expenditures. Under the 501(h) designation, a PTA need not report volunteer lobbying activity for the purposes of tax reporting.

All PTAs with lobbying expenditures must report these on their Form 990 or 990 EZ tax returns, whether they are a 501(c)(3) or have made the 501(h) election.

**California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Regulations**

Most PTAs are unlikely to have expenditures high enough to require reporting under California law, but it is wise to carefully account for all PTA expenditures made for any legislative purpose. Contact the district PTA president or the State office if there are questions about how California reporting laws might affect the PTA.

California law establishes procedures and requirements for filing reports on election campaign expenses. A PTA
that participates in a campaign to pass or defeat any local school bond, parcel tax or local or statewide ballot measure must file a report with the State of California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC).

1. **Contributions* up to a total of $1,000**: No special reporting is necessary, other than on your regular tax forms.

2. **Contributions***:
   a. **Single donation**: Can be made in one payment in a calendar year once in five years without special reporting to the FPPC. Note: This is considered the "first bite of the apple." Keep a record that the five-year timeline has been triggered.
   b. **Two or more donations**: The second contribution within a calendar year that would total more than $1,000 triggers the "second bite of the apple." The association needs to file as a "recipient committee" with the FPPC and report the donation within 10 days of the contribution. This is not very complicated, but contact California State PTA if you are considering this.

3. **Contributions* of $10,000 more**: The association must file a "major donor" report to the FPPC, an easy form.

4. **Contributions* of $50,000 more**: The association becomes a sponsor of the ballot measure and must be named on all campaign literature

*Contributions* refer to both monetary and in-kind contributions made in a calendar year on any combination of ballot measures.

**Note**: Keep in mind that 501(c)(3) associations are entitled by law to lobby on ballot measures (not candidates). The reporting forms are relatively simple.

For more information on reporting requirements, go to www.fppc.ca.gov.

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**California Education Code and Election Law**

School district ballot measures fall under special laws limiting use of school facilities and resources for campaign purposes. Check with California State PTA to ensure that you stay within the rules.

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**For additional information** on state legislation and ballot measures, contact the California State PTA Director of Legislation at legislation@capta.org or 916.440.1985 ext. 311.
Organizing a Letter Writing Campaign

Legislators tell us that one of the most effective methods of communicating our positions is through letters. Letters can be mailed or faxed. In a time crunch, phone calls are necessary and helpful, but letters from constituents make the most difference. Emails are less effective because it is difficult to verify that the sender is a constituent.

When organizing a letter campaign, keep in mind that volume beats originality. A hand-written original letter is great, but few people take the time to write one. However, providing a sample letter for people to download, sign and either mail themselves or take to a PTA box at school means that many more people are likely to participate.

Discuss the campaign with your school principal or superintendent, and get permission if you are using a school facility. This is a legal activity, but it is a courtesy to do so. Note: there are more restrictive rules if the letters pertain to a local school bond or parcel tax campaign.

Select a limited time span for the letter campaign; e.g., a week.

Communicate the campaign widely, through email lists, presentations at PTA meetings and your PTA newsletter. (Note: You cannot legally send home fliers for this activity via student backpacks. Check with your principal or school district about utilizing other school information resources.)

Explain to the letter signers that their signature, printed name and street address (make sure they are legible!) are required for their letters to make a difference, and that you will not record the information for other uses. Make sure to include blanks on the letters for signature, printed name and street address. Legislators disregard any letters not from their constituents, and they actually check names and addresses to ensure their legitimacy. Also, they normally will respond to the letter sender.

Letter campaign via email: This is usually the method that generates the most letters. Parents and staff who normally don’t volunteer for other things will often surprise you by taking the time to download, print, sign and return letters on important issues.

It is better to link to letters on a website, rather than attach sample letters to an email, because many people are reluctant to open attachments. If you have a PTA website, upload the letters to the home page. If not, you can provide a link to the letters on the council, district or California State PTA website.

It is easiest to ask people to download, print, and sign the letters themselves and then provide a PTA box at their school office to return the letters. In the PTA box (label it “PTA letters”), include hanging folders labeled with each legislator’s name, so that people self-file – this saves a lot of time.

If there is not an easy place for people to return letters (e.g., you are sending letters county-wide), ask individuals to mail the letters themselves to the Capitol. The letters must be mailed to each legislator in a separate envelope.

If you have multiple legislators in your area (you will have at least one Assembly member and one Senator), put a letter addressed to each on the website. Include a letter to the Governor as well.

Include in the instructions this link for people to determine who their legislators are if you have multiple legislators: http://legmap01.lc.ca.gov/amapsearch/framepage.asp. It is also helpful in case people wish to forward the email to their friends and relatives in other parts of the state.

Print-and-Sign Letter campaign. Another way to get letters is to pre-print them and bring them to PTA meetings or other events. Make the letters available, but don’t pressure people to sign them.

Alternatives:
• Print postcards with the key message on one side, and a space for individual comment, name, address and signature on the back.
• Bring a variety of types of notecards or other stationery to the meeting, and ask people to take five minutes to write and address a letter. Include a fact sheet or message to legislators to help letter-writers stay on message.

Thank participants: Regardless of the method of the campaign, thank letter signers for their support.

Options for returning letters to legislators:
• Mail letters in a batch to each legislator in his or her Sacramento office. Make sure to include the legislator’s room number with the address.
• Hand-carry the letters to each legislator’s district office.
• Hand-carry the letters to each legislator in Sacramento.
• In the latter two options, make an appointment with the legislator or a staff person and present the letters with a plea for action.
How to Organize a Local Rally

Organizing a rally can be a highly effective advocacy tool. A rally can energize your members to work on advocacy activities. It can attract the press, so that community members can become informed about our issues and positions. A rally is also an opportunity to be heard by legislators.

Here are some ideas for organizing a rally (note that you can select all or just a few from the list).

1. **Decide on the purpose** of the rally. What is your message?
2. **Decide on a date, time and location.** (Note items 3 and 4 below). Choices include the following:
   a. **Lunchtime at an elementary school.** Parents can bring their children to the rally from recess without affecting class time, and elementary-aged children holding signs make great photo opportunities for the media.
   b. **Saturday morning at a school or park.** Parents can bring their children in a relaxed atmosphere.
   c. **After school at a school field or park.**
3. **Obtain approval** for the rally by your PTA and record in the minutes (necessary for insurance).
4. **Obtain any necessary permits** from the school district or the city/town.
5. **Invite speakers.** Options include:
   a. PTA president
   b. Local legislators or their staff
   c. School superintendent
   d. School board members
   e. Teachers
   f. High school students
   g. PTA legislative chairman (good for wrap-up)
   
   *Note: Ask each speaker to talk for no more than three to four minutes to keep speeches brief.*
6. **Select a moderator,** someone who can keep the rally on track.
7. **Arrange for a high school band, or a few of its members,** to play.
8. **Invite the press,** including TV news stations, radio, newspapers.
9. **Publicize the rally** to parents and the community.
10. **Make signs.**
    a. Download a PTA advocacy logo or make hand-painted signs.
    b. Affix to paint sticks (request from a painting supplies store) with staples.
11. **Hold a letter-writing campaign,** by providing sample letters for participants to sign.
12. **Sign up new members** at the rally. Prepare for handling cash and bring membership cards.
13. **Consider videotaping** the event for PTA websites and other websites.
14. **Let us know how it went by e-mail to** legislation@capta.org and communications@capta.org.

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Fig. A-2 How to Organize a Local Rally
Organizing a Local Candidates Forum

1. Form a committee. Participation on this committee falls within the *Job Description for Legislative Advocacy Chair*.

2. Determine whether PTA will sponsor the forum alone or with another nonpartisan organization, such as the League of Women Voters or a branch of the American Association of University Women.

3. Set the date, and obtain a facility that is centrally located, if possible. If it will accommodate the number of candidates, a school district board room is an excellent location, and the physical environment, including audience space is, in most cases, already set up.

4. Decide whether to videotape the forum. This can be done through a local cable TV station, a high school video production class, or by a volunteer. Video can be uploaded to an online videosharing site and the PTA website. Some local government TV channels are willing to work in partnership with the League of Women Voters and PTA to tape forums for replay. Note: The camera should focus only on the moderator and the candidates.

5. Draft invitations to candidates. Be sure to include:
   a) Complete information on date, time, and place;
   b) Guidelines and ground rules for the forum (e.g., there will be only written questions, amount of time allowed for candidates’ responses; topics of questions; forum format (including time for opening and closing statements, candidate order for statements and answers, etc.); rules prohibiting campaign literature distribution in the forum room; if the forum will be videotaped for replay on cable TV or displayed on a website; etc.);
   c) A request for any information needed from the candidate for promotion of the forum; e.g., biography and photo;
   d) Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of forum committee’s contact person;
   e) Due date for the candidate to respond.

6. Candidate schedules are often hectic. They may be contacted by many organizations with requests for information, personal appearances, and/or forums. Establishing a personal connection by calling all candidates or their campaigns to inform them about the forum, to extend an initial invitation, and to advise them to look for a more formal invitation in the mail can facilitate both the process of organizing the forum and communicating with the candidates.

7. Obtain home addresses and e-mail addresses of all official candidates from the Registrar of Voters, and send invitations by certified mail with a return receipt requested. The signed, returned receipts should be kept on file.

8. Determine physical arrangements:
   a) Provide adequate accessible seating for attendees.
   b) Seating for candidates should be in the form of a head table, preferably elevated so they are visible to the audience. Seating assignments should be done by lottery with each candidate drawing a seat number prior to the beginning of the forum. The table should also be draped and water provided for candidates and moderator.
   c) The moderator is the forum facilitator and may either stand at a podium or be seated at the table with the candidates. If the former, the moderator should be provided with a chair. If the latter, the moderator must be seated in a location that allows for eye contact with all candidates and control over the forum process and decorum.
   d) Provide an adequate sound system with microphones available to rotate among the candidates, with a separate microphone for the moderator.
e) Provide tables for any refreshments and for any literature pertaining to the forum, such as agendas, programs, packets of candidates’ biographies and questionnaire responses.

f) Follow facility use permit regulations concerning distribution of campaign literature. Note: If a table is provided outside the forum room for candidate literature, the opportunity must be offered to all candidates. The materials should not be made available until the conclusion of the forum to avoid having them brought into the forum room. It is generally a good idea to place a limit on the amount of literature any individual candidate can place on the table to maintain the nonpartisan nature of the overall forum environment.

g) Provide a table for question sorters toward the front of the room. Timers should be located in the middle of the front row and visible to all candidates.

9. Identify volunteer responsibilities:

a) Volunteers from PTA and co-sponsoring organizations that organize and/or staff the forum should have no personal ties to any candidacy, and shall not have publicly expressed support or opposition to any of the candidates.

b) The forum committee should arrange for the following: greeters for both candidates and attendees; hospitality; person to open the forum and lead the Pledge of Allegiance – may be the moderator or president of the sponsoring organization(s).

c) Secure a neutral moderator. Consider requesting a representative of the League of Women Voters or a respected political editor from the local media. The moderator or his/her organization cannot have casually or formally endorsed any of the candidates.

d) Question Sorters – Enlist one PTA representative with no personal ties to any candidate, and one representative from each of the co-sponsoring organizations.

e) Timers – one to keep track of time, and one to hold up signs to signal candidates.

10. Publicity – articles for the newspaper, radio announcements, cable announcements, fliers for PTA newsletters, etc.

11. On the day of the forum:

a) Attendees enter, ushers provide blank index cards on which attendees may write questions for the candidates. Each index card should be used for only one question.

b) Begin with Pledge of Allegiance, welcome and a statement of the nonpartisan policies of the sponsoring groups.

c) Moderator should go over the basic forum guidelines and procedures that were distributed to all candidates, so the audience will also understand them and know what to expect. The moderator must specify the length of time allowed for opening and closing statements, if they are included, and must also specify the amount of time each candidate will be given to respond to each question. If the forum is televised, this statement will inform the home audience as well. The moderator will also include the following information:

i. The order of questions will be rotated among the candidates in random order.

ii. Whether all questions will be in writing or if questions from attendees will be permitted.

iii. All questions will be screened for relevance, to avoid duplication, and to assure adherence to the guidelines and ground rules. Personal questions or attacks on any candidate will not be acknowledged.

iv. If a question is directed to a specific candidate, it must be issue-focused. The candidate will have a set amount of time to respond. All other candidates may have an opportunity to respond, if they so desire.

If a question is directed to all candidates, each candidate will have up to one minute to respond.
d) Timers should hold up signs to signal speakers:
   i. Green: start
   ii. Yellow: 15 seconds left
   iii. Red: stop

e) The moderator should state that verbal interaction between the audience and the candidates during the forum will not be permitted. The forum is neutral territory for a sharing of philosophy, ideas and information, not campaigning.

f) Begin forum. While candidates are giving their opening statements, screeners can begin sorting questions to be asked of the candidates. If questions have been received through outreach efforts prior to the forum, they should be included in the mix. After the opening statements, the moderator asks the candidates questions received from the question sorters. (Note: In the event attendance is small at the beginning of the forum, the moderator should have a few questions in hand that were collected prior to the forum. This is even more important when the forum is televised.)

g) Moderator or other designee should close and thank cosponsors, the TV station and home audience, if applicable, and everyone in the forum audience for attending, reminding them of the election date and encouraging them to study the candidates and cast their votes.
Resolutions

Resolution Process

New business (other than amendments to bylaws or the Legislation Program) is brought before the convention through the resolutions process.

When adopted by the California State PTA convention delegates, a resolution becomes an official PTA position which provides authority and direction for action by California State PTA and its constituent associations. A new resolution in conflict with one already adopted shall not be introduced, unless the former resolution is first rescinded. If the motion to rescind is adopted but the new resolution is defeated, the convention delegates shall be given an opportunity to readopt the previously rescinded resolution by majority vote.

Resolutions remain in effect as current positions for at least 10 years, unless they are rescinded or replaced by a newer version by convention delegates or designated as historical record by the California State PTA Board of Managers.

Resolutions are designated as historical record when one or more of these are true:

1. The intent has been fully carried out.
2. The same subject has been expanded or updated by other resolutions.
3. It is no longer appropriate to PTA concerns.
4. It was applicable to a specific past program, event or circumstance.

Resolutions adopted more than 10 years earlier may be designated as historical if they have not been resubmitted to convention delegates or reviewed and deemed relevant as a current position by the California State PTA Board of Managers. A vote by the Board of Managers must be taken to rescind resolutions or to designate resolutions to the historical record.

Criteria for Resolutions

Each resolution submitted to California State PTA for consideration and possible action by convention delegates shall meet the following criteria:

1. Concern a field of interest of California State PTA;
2. Be in harmony with the Purposes and basic policies of the PTA (Know the PTA Chapter);
3. Concern a matter which is statewide in scope;
4. Be accompanied by resource material which validates the statewide concern and “whereas” statements (Where We Stand sections, Advocacy Chapter);
5. Include a brief summary, table of contents bibliography, and index listing the resources to validate each “whereas”; and
6. Be written in appropriate resolution format and submitted in accordance with all specifications set by the California State PTA Board of Managers.

Submitting Resolutions

For important information on writing and submitting a resolution, refer to the California State PTA publication “Procedure for Preparing a PTA Convention Resolution.” This document may be obtained on the California State PTA website (capta.org), or upon request to the California State PTA office by telephone or via email to resolutions@capta.org.

A resolution should be submitted only by association vote of a PTA unit, council, or district in good standing; by a PTA inter-district committee with the approval of the majority of districts concerned; or by the California State PTA Board of Managers.

Reminder: A resolution being carried forward from a previous PTA administration must be reviewed and deemed relevant by the current PTA association.

Any unit, council or district PTA planning to prepare a resolution for convention must submit a DRAFT resolution, background summary, and initial list of resources to the California State PTA office no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 1*. DRAFT resolution materials may be delivered, faxed or emailed and must be submitted with the Resolution Action Cover Sheet. Approvals through channels are not required at this stage.

FINAL Resolutions from unit, council, district, and inter-district PTA committees must be received in the California State PTA office no later than 5:00 p.m. January 5* with the completed Resolution Action Cover Sheet. The originator's FINAL resolution shall be transmitted through channels (Lines of Communication, Know Your PTA Chapter) for action at each level. The maker of the resolution is responsible for ensuring the FINAL resolution documents and a binder of substantiating research are submitted in written and electronic form to the California State PTA office by the deadline with the appropriate signatures.

*The submittal will be accepted on the next business day for any deadline which falls on a holiday or weekend.

Council and/or district PTAs executive board(s) shall review a FINAL resolution submitted by the originating PTA body and shall upon review promptly take action to approve, disapprove, or choose no recommendation. This action shall be recorded on the resolution’s action cover sheet. Disapproval or lack of recommendation does not prevent the originating body from submitting a resolution to California State PTA.

The resolution maker may optionally submit the resolution to other PTA units, councils and districts for additional endorsement. Endorsement must be approved by that PTA’s executive board.

The Board of Managers should meet the same deadline for submitting resolutions as other PTA bodies. However, the California State PTA Board of Managers may find it necessary to present new business which is developed after the due date to convention delegates.
California State PTA Resolutions
Committee Review and
Recommendation

The Resolutions Committee shall meet after the January 5 deadline and before the next Board of Managers meeting to review and evaluate the resolutions submitted.

The Resolutions Committee may edit or adapt resolutions as necessary to make them appropriate for convention action without changing the intent. The committee will review such changes with resolution makers prior to finalizing.

The resolutions committee will prepare a report for the California State PTA Board of Managers explaining the recommended disposition of all resolutions submitted.

The Resolutions Committee’s possible recommendations include:
- to refer a resolution to convention delegates;
- to refer a resolution to a California State PTA Board of Managers commission or committee for information or study;
- to combine two or more related resolutions;
- to return a resolution to the originating body with a written explanation of the reason(s) for the decision; or
- to refer a resolution to National PTA.

The California State PTA Board of Managers shall review the recommendations of the resolutions committee and decide which resolutions will be placed on the convention agenda as action items. Placement on the convention agenda by the California State PTA Board of Managers does not constitute endorsement by California State PTA. The California State PTA Board of Managers may endorse a resolution by following appropriate motion protocols.

The resolutions committee chairman is responsible for reporting promptly to the originating PTA groups the disposition of the resolutions submitted.

Resolutions recommended for presentation to delegates at convention shall include a brief summary of background information and will indicate all actions taken by other PTAs.

Presentation of Resolutions at Convention

California State PTA shall publish the text of each resolution in the Convention Chronicle with the CALL to convention. Resolutions shall also be emailed through channels, and the proposed resolutions shall be placed in the convention section of the California State PTA website.

Prior to convention, units, councils and districts are encouraged to review, discuss and vote on the resolutions to guide delegate action at convention. Delegates should be aware that a resolution could be changed at convention.

Resolutions will be presented to convention delegates for debate and vote in accordance with convention rules and regulations. Resolutions for consideration at convention will be formatted as presented, and provided to all delegates. The resolutions committee chairman shall present each resolution to convention delegates for consideration.

Time will be allocated at the state convention for delegate hearings on resolutions. Voting delegates are strongly encouraged to attend resolution hearings to ask questions or to prepare amendments.

To find PTA Resolutions refer to:
- California State PTA Resolutions Book or at capta.org/advocacy
- Advocacy Topic Index in the Toolkit
- List of titles in Toolkit, Advocacy Chapter
- District PTA offices
- Resolutions Chairman resolutions@capta.org, 916.440.1985 ext. 324

Resolution which have not been through the approval process may not be introduced from the convention floor.

Emergency Resolutions

Provision is made for submitting an emergency resolution, if the urgency of the subject matter arose after the January 5 deadline.

- Emergency resolutions must conform to the same criteria as required for all other resolutions.
- Emergency resolutions submitted by a PTA district, council, or unit shall have the approval of the originating body and the signature of the president of those constituent PTA associations (unit, council or district PTAs) through which it is transmitted to California State PTA.
- Emergency resolutions, accompanied by verification of the urgency of the subject matter, must be submitted to the resolutions committee for review and approved for considered at the convention by the California State PTA Board of Directors.

Action Following Convention

Resolutions adopted by the delegates at convention shall constitute a directive to the California State PTA Board of Managers. Resolutions shall be assigned to the appropriate commission(s) or committee(s) or to the president of California State PTA for implementation or for preparation of guidelines for further action. The commission(s), committee(s), or the president shall be requested to give these resolutions priority consideration.

The resolutions committee (or committee task force) shall review all adopted resolutions which are to be forwarded to the National PTA convention to ensure the resolutions meet National PTA criteria.
If delegates vote to refer a resolution to the Board of Managers, the resolutions chairman shall assign it to the appropriate commission(s) or committee(s) of California State PTA for study and/or action. Any resolution not acted upon by convention delegates shall be returned to the resolutions committee. The board of managers will determine the disposition of the resolution upon receiving a recommendation from the resolutions committee.

A report on the implementation of the resolutions shall be given to the delegates at the next annual convention.

For additional information on the resolution process, contact the California State PTA Resolutions Chairman at resolutions@capta.org or 916.440.1985 ext. 324
### Where We Stand: Resolutions

Each year delegates to the California State PTA convention take action on resolutions that have been submitted by unit, council, district PTAs or the California State PTA Board of Managers. Resolutions adopted by convention delegates serve as a basis for action in unit, council, district PTA and California State PTA.

Resolutions adopted since 1961 are available from the California State PTA office or through capta.org. The starred (*) titles represent resolutions adopted by the California State PTA Board of Managers. (These were not voted upon by Convention delegates.)

| Air Pollution (1973) | Equalized Base Revenue Limit Funding (1991) |
| Alcohol Beverage Advertising that Targets Youth (1992) | Extended Educational Services for the Handicapped (1967) |
| Class Size Reduction Flexibility (2005) | Immunization Awareness and Educational Programs (1975) |
| Closed Captioned TV (1978) | Inclusive Schools Build Stronger Communities (2013) |
| Community Drug Abuse Prevention Programs (1970) | Increased School Nurse-to-Student Ratios (2016) |
| Desegregation and Neighborhood Schools (1979) | Limiting Concurrent Sales of Gasoline and Alcohol and the Proliferation of Outlets (1985) |
| Educational Testing and Test Scores (1971) | Opposition to Teledvised Commercials in California Classrooms (1990)* |
Paintball Gun Control (1993)
Parent/Community Action for Effective Schools (1993)
Pedestrian Safety Education (1990)
Pesticides (1972)
Playground Surface Safety (2002)
Post Proposition 13 Funding of Public Education (1979)
Prejudice Awareness Education (1989)
Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse (1979)
Prohibiting the Promotion of Tobacco Products (1987)
Promoting the Inclusion of Nonpublic Schools on California's Megan's Law Registered Sex Offender Database (2008)
Property Tax Limitation (1978)
Protection of Children from the Harmful Effects of Aircraft Emissions (1998)
Public School Governance Authority (2007)
Qualifications for Candidacy in California Elections (2013)
Quality of Life Portrayed on Television (1979)
Reduction of Student/Teacher Workload (Class Size) (1989)
Regulation of 976 Information Access Service (1986)
Regulation of Liquor Licenses Near Schools (1997)
Regulation of the Display and Sale to Minors of Drug-Use Information and Paraphernalia Including Cigarette Papers (1979)
Safe Routes to School for All Children (2008)
Scoliosis Screening (1980)
Seat Belt and Child Restraint Usage (1983)
Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility Awareness (1991)
Smoking and Health (1964)
Social Host Accountability and Underage Drinking (2009)
State Government Responsibility for a Rational Budget Process (1992)*
State Tax Reform (1991)
Student Assessment, Achievement and Accountability (2000)
Student Substance Abuse: Alternatives to Zero Tolerance (2003)
Substance Use and Abuse During Pregnancy (1987)
Suicide Prevention Education and Awareness (1983)
Summer Learning Loss (2013)
Summer School (1980)
Sun Safety: Skin Cancer Prevention Measures at School (2005)
Support and Funding for Voluntary Integration Programs (1980)
Support for the Civic Mission of Schools (2006)
Support for Quality Child Care (1986)
Support of Public Education, PTA Priority (1980)
Synthetic Marijuana - Education and Awareness (2015)
Teacher Preparation for Elementary Education (1973)
Teacher Quality: Recruitment, Retention and Resources (2001)
Teen Driving Safety (2009)
Television Literacy and Program Accountability (1993)
Television/Screen Time Awareness (2006)
Threatening Phone Calls to Schools (1990)
Tobacco Advertising That Targets Minors (1993)
Torture Toys (1972)
Toxins (Persistent and Bioaccumulative) and Their Effects on Children (2002)
Treatment Centers for the Sexually Abused (1978)
Trees for Life (1989)
Tuition Tax Credits (1982)*
Use by Mass News Media of Names of Juveniles in Police Matters (1971)
Use of Children as Subjects in Pornographic Materials (1977)
Violence and Vandalism (1980)
Violence in the Home (1977)
Violence Prevention in Schools (1999)
Voluntary Fingerprinting (1983)
Weapons on Campus (1973)
Youth Involvement (2004)
Where We Stand: Position Statements

From time to time the California State PTA Board of Managers conducts studies of issues of general concern in light of the Purposes of the PTA and issues that affect the health, education and well-being of children and youth.

A study may result in formulation and adoption of a statement that establishes, clarifies or interprets a PTA position or belief. Position statements provide a basis for action on legislation and other California State PTA action.

Upon adoption, position statements, resolutions and general board positions are positions of California State PTA and remain in effect until they are amended, rescinded or retired.

No new statement, board resolution or general board position can be introduced that is in conflict with an existing position unless the respective corresponding position is first rescinded. The California State PTA Board of Managers may not amend or rescind a resolution and no board position may be in conflict with a resolution.

Statements are reviewed every five years to revise, review and deem relevant or to retire from current use. Statements that include quotes excerpted from state or federal law are reviewed annually. The dates under the title of each statement represent the date first adopted and the date of the latest revision/reaffirmation.

Accountability Systems: Statewide, Federal and Local

Adopted August 2016 – Education Commission

California State PTA believes that the primary goal of any accountability system is improved learning for every student. An effective accountability system should incorporate multiple measures, promote continuous improvement, rely on shared responsibility and coordination among all participants and governing bodies, and provide transparency and clarity.

Multiple Measures

California State PTA believes an accountability system should contain multiple measures which give a more complete picture of a school/school district’s areas of strength, areas of weakness and areas of need. This should be more than a single number.

A system should include measurement of both performance and growth with established expectations for progress. Schools and school districts should be held directly accountable for:

1. students’ academic progress toward college and career readiness (including as measured by standardized test scores), as well as other student outcomes;
2. conditions that support equal access, student engagement, family engagement, positive school climate, civic participation, quality teaching, and capacity building; and
3. eliminating achievement and opportunity gaps as an explicit objective and specific strategies and resources for accomplishing that.

Continuous Improvement

California State PTA believes an accountability system must reinforce state and local commitments to continuous improvement; therefore, it should include:

1. regular evaluation of progress using reliable data;
2. interventions, strategies, and supports that lead toward improved teaching and increased learning and student success;
3. capacity-building at all levels of the system; and
4. procedures that lead to evaluation and improvement of the accountability system itself so that it grows more effective and meaningful over time.

Shared Responsibility

Accountability rests on the conviction that improving student learning is a responsibility shared by all participants in the education system, including individuals (e.g., students, parents and families, teachers) and organizations (e.g., schools, school districts, policy-making bodies), and also by the public and all levels of government; therefore, California State PTA believes that:

1. State and federal accountability systems should be aligned in their data requirements, intervention strategies, and other features in order to promote coordination, efficiency of effort, and clarity of purpose;
2. Local education agencies should be able to tailor their strategies to local needs and circumstances framed in the context of a set of state/national expectations that give local communities a broader societal context for determining their progress and success;
3. The State of California bears responsibility for creating the conditions that make it possible for schools and school districts to accomplish the goals of the accountability system. In fact, the California Constitution requires the legislature to "provide for a system of common schools by which a free school shall be kept up and supported in each district;"
4. The State of California has the responsibility to effectively oversee and manage data collection and reporting used in the accountability system to inform policy decisions and to improve on a continuous basis the conditions under which schools operate; and
5. The State of California has the responsibility to provide schools sufficient funding and resources to achieve the goals set in the accountability system.

Transparency and Clarity

California State PTA believes that an accountability system must provide both transparency and clarity; therefore, it should incorporate:
1. Clear, meaningful communication of local and statewide accountability elements to all stakeholders and the public;

2. A shared and commonly understood basis for measurement of all components of the accountability system;

3. Transparency related to opportunity and achievement gaps;

4. Transparency in results, progress measures and steps toward intervention; and

5. Communication about the accountability system in languages and terminology that are understandable to students, families, and the public.

California State PTA believes that, across every facet of an effective accountability system, state and local leaders must both affirm and support the critical roles that parents play in improving student learning. Parents are their child’s first teachers, advocates for their child within the education system, supporters of their local schools, and concerned and highly-interested citizens who play a vital role in determining important school improvement strategies.

Arts in Education

Adopted March 1985 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Education Commission

California State PTA believes visual and performing arts should be a basic and integral part of a balanced curriculum for all students.

California State PTA PTA believes the visual and performing arts can:

- Enhance students’ academic performance in all curricular areas;
- Teach a common core of knowledge that will encourage students to appreciate human history and cultures;
- Enable students to develop higher order thinking skills;
- Enable students to discover and to express their own creativity; and
- Help students to develop a life-long appreciation of the arts.

California State PTA believes a quality arts program should be:

- Structured, sequential, and standards based;
- Offered as an integral part of the regularly scheduled instructional program K-12;
- Taught by qualified teachers who have received appropriate training and in-service programs;
- Enhanced by specialists in the arts who lend their expertise to the arts program;
- Provided to students in facilities specially designed for arts programs;
- Supported by high quality materials and resources;

- An opportunity to explore careers in the arts; and
- A high school graduation requirement.

Assessment and Testing (Statewide)

Adopted April 2016 – Education Commission

California State PTA believes assessment must be an integral part of the instructional process and is essential to teaching and learning but must not distract from time allotted for delivery of regular curriculum. The overall goal of any student assessment program should be to identify what students know and how well they can apply that knowledge. A statewide assessment program should measure individual student achievement over time and the effectiveness of instructional delivery and curriculum support.

California State PTA believes that the systemic analysis and use of assessment data to guide instruction is a key factor for the improvement of student outcomes, achievement in high-poverty schools and closing the achievement gap.

California State PTA further believes that assessment aligned with meaningful content standards can provide important information to students, families, and communities about how students are progressing in their learning and can be used to identify and address inequalities in access to learning opportunities.

California State PTA affirms that assessment and testing should be used to support teaching and learning and that performance standards should reflect a curriculum that engages students and assists them in developing problem solving, critical thinking, and reasoning skills. Tests should not be limited to multiple choice or true/false questions but must provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate what they have learned. Student performance assessment must be linked to curricular goals that provide students with skills to be successful in the global economy.

Components of a sound assessment program should include:

- Formats that are culturally and racially bias-free and in a language that the student understands;
- Measurement of what has been taught;
- Multiple measures which are performance-based, reflecting the different kinds of knowledge and skills that a student is expected to acquire;
- Procedures and information that are clear and easy to understand;
- Guidance on how to use assessment results to enhance student learning Guidelines for appropriate use of data;
- Scores that are reliable and valid and provided to educators and parents; and
- Clear communication to parents/guardians and community of an accurate profile of student and school performance provided in a timely manner.
California State PTA also believes that at no time should a single test be considered the sole determinant of a student's academic or work future. An assessment system built solely on tests and what can be easily measured has the potential of being misleading.

**Assistance to Families in Need**

*Adopted February 1998 – Reviewed and deemed relevant March 2012 – Community Concerns Commission*

California State PTA believes that children are our most important natural resource, that the family is the basic unit of society responsible for the support and nurturing of children, and that every effort must be made to ensure that public policies concur with the best interest of children and families. California State PTA further believes that society has a responsibility to establish policy that ensures effective community services and assistance programs when necessary for families in need. These programs should be structured and delivered in ways that contribute to the integrity and stability of families and to ensure that children will have adequate support to meet their basic needs.

California State PTA supports government assistance programs intended to help families survive a temporary crisis and protect children from the extreme effects of poverty. California State PTA believes that government has the responsibility to plan and coordinate these programs for families in need, establishing a clear definition of responsibility at each level of government and adhering to governmental fiscal responsibility, but keeping foremost the priorities of children and youth.

California State PTA believes that to be effective in assisting families to become and remain self-sufficient, programs to help families in need of government assistance must include at least the following:

- **Job training, job placement and job creation**
  - Train and place recipients in job-related programs so they may become self-sufficient;
  - Promote opportunities for teenage parents to complete basic education programs;
  - Provide access to community and adult education, technical schools and job training programs that meet the needs of the highly-skilled technological workplace;
  - Coordinate community employment resources for job development;
  - Require accountability by families in relation to work, training and education;

- **Coordination of health and welfare programs and needed support services**
  - Affordable, quality child care that provides flexible hours and guarantees payment to licensed providers until parents transition from assistance to work;
  - Reliable public or private transportation for access to services and employment;
  - A health care system that provides equal access to quality, affordable, basic preventative health care and adequate support services within the field of mental health and guidance;
  - Enforced collection and distribution of legally awarded child support payments;
  - Provision for safe and affordable housing;
  - Adequate nutritional services to prevent health and learning problems associated with malnutrition and hunger;
  - A free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment and funding for non-educational requirements of all individuals with special needs;

- **Eligibility requirements**
  - Reasonable and flexible time limits that enable families to become self-supporting;
  - Statewide policies that encourage families to stay together when in the best interest of their children and that remove obstacles which eliminate two parent families from eligibility;
  - A system that provides a basic level of existence and does not penalize working families.

California State PTA believes that programs to assist families in need should include a safety net for individuals who do not meet established criteria for assistance to ensure that all children who reside in California have a right of access to a quality education, adequate food and shelter, and basic health services.

**Basic Education**

*Adopted May 1979 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Education Commission*

California State PTA recognizes that “basic education” is an issue of continuing interest and that it has different meanings for various individuals and groups. The PTA believes that all children and youth have the responsibility and should have the opportunity to develop their abilities to their fullest potential. It is fundamental to PTA philosophy that the responsibility of the parent as the first teacher of the child must be recognized, encouraged and continually emphasized. It is essential that schools acknowledge the role of parents and consistently involve them at all levels of their children’s education.

PTA further believes it is essential that communities understand and agree upon the basic elements necessary for one to function as a contributing member in a free democratic society; and that these elements should interact and be relevant in a changing world. Schools need a balanced curriculum, clear standards for student achievement, qualified and competent teaching, and parents and community involvement.

When these are all present students should be able to:

- Develop and demonstrate competence in areas of reading, writing, oral communications, computation; in critical thinking skills and decision-making; and in the
ability to apply these skills to all areas of knowledge and to the needs of day-to-day living;

• Develop and demonstrate an understanding in the areas of social studies, science, the arts, health, safety, foreign language, environmental needs, uses of technology, and the world of work;

• Develop an awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity;

• Develop an abiding sense of personal worth, sense of purpose and confidence in one's own abilities; and

• Develop the skills for being a responsible and caring citizen.

California State PTA recognizes the need in today's complex society for a support system for educating children and youth, a system in which schools play a major but not all-inclusive role. In order to provide a basic education for every young person, it is essential that parents, schools and communities cooperate in providing a total learning environment.

Before- and After-School Options for Children and Youth


California State PTA believes that high quality before- and after-school programs for all children and youth can provide engaging and enriching environments that improve academic achievement. Statistics show that such programs improve a number of student outcomes, including increased graduation rates and reduce the likelihood of arrest and incarceration.

California State PTA recognizes that a range of before- and after-school programs is needed to serve children and youth from pre-school through high school. Each program needs to be based on the particular needs of the young people in the community.

California State PTA believes the elements of a quality before- and after-school program include:

Program Design – With the development of academically focused programs that center on:

• An array of enrichment, cultural and recreational activities

• Activities that are developmentally and culturally appropriate for the children they serve

• Career development and life skills training for middle and high school students

• Opportunities for children and youth to develop positive relationships with peers and adults

• Health and wellness through nutritional snacks, exercise programs and prevention information

• Adequate funding to make programs and resources affordable and accessible

Facilities and Environment – With programs that:

• Preferably, are school-based with efforts to coordinate facilities and equipment between school and program sites

• Comply with relevant health and safety regulations

• Have safe indoor and outdoor space sufficient for a diversity of activities

• Rely on age appropriate equipment and materials for enhancing learning for participants

• Provide reasonable accommodations to make the program accessible to students with disabilities which may include providing a private location or specialized medical training for the handling of a student's personal needs

Partnerships – With key stakeholders, including parents, schools and community organizations, involved in:

• Collaboration that is responsible for planning, outreach and evaluation

• Coordination between the school site staff and program staff to enhance the academic components of the program by linking the school day and after-school curriculum

• Engagement by families in planning to ensure sustained youth participation and assure that the needs of each participant are met

• Participation by parent and community volunteers as an integral part of the program

• Active engagement of children and youth in community programs and community service

Staffing – With programs to include staff members who are:

• Able to create positive relationships and mentoring opportunities between staff and participants by having adequate staff to participant ratios

• Qualified with appropriate qualifications including the ability to provide tutoring and homework assistance in accordance with the educational component of the program

• Involved in staff development that is provided on an ongoing basis and is appropriate to program responsibilities

• Adequately compensated

• Evaluated on their job performance on a regular basis

Program Management – With the management and administration of programs that:

• Implement clear short- and long-term goals developed by the collaboration of key stakeholders

• Develop and implement relevant policies and procedures

• Maintain fiscal oversight and sustainability

• Are evaluated for effectiveness through continuous multiple measures and result in necessary program modifications
Behavioral Health and Social Emotional Development


California State PTA believes greater awareness is needed in understanding issues related to behavioral health and social emotional development. California State PTA further believes such concerns and other external and internal barriers to learning and teaching must include collaboration within the school-community. Collaboration is essential in planning and implementing a full range of interventions to promote behavioral health and social emotional development and provide a systemic approach to prevention, early intervention, and treatment of manifesting problems.

California State PTA supports efforts to:

- Promote and encourage support for the rights, dignity, and individuality of all human beings;
- Ensure children and youth have access to and receive timely mental health diagnosis;
- Provide information and education to understand and sustain children, youth, and family behavioral health and social emotional development, and to counter stigma related to problems;
- Unite school and community resources to develop and implement a comprehensive and cohesive range of interventions promoting behavioral health and social emotional development and providing a systemic approach to prevention, early intervention, and treatment of manifesting problems;
- Support research to enhance development and implementation of a comprehensive and cohesive range of interventions promoting behavioral health and social emotional development and providing a systemic approach to prevention, early intervention, and treatment of those manifesting problems.
- Ensure interventions address external and internal factors contributing to behavioral health and social emotional development concerns;
- Address problems equitably and ensure necessary interventions are provided and implemented in the least disruptive and least restrictive manner feasible, with a commitment to inclusionary practices;
- Ensure protection of children, youth, and family rights related to decision making and access to information about intervention options and likely outcomes; and
- Support legislation that fully integrates school improvement policy and practice concerns related to (a) promoting behavioral health and social emotional development and (b) addressing behavioral health and social emotional development and other external and internal barriers to learning and teaching.

By supporting such efforts, PTA can help assure that schools and communities work together in a comprehensive and cohesive manner to improve the well being of children and youth, and their families, and enhance equity of opportunity for all children and youth to succeed at school and in life.

Character Education


California State PTA believes the responsibility for character education is shared by the home, the place of worship, the school, and the community. In order to build the foundations for the development of conscience, research shows that in the early years it is critical for each child to develop a close relationship with at least one person who is willing to celebrate the child’s life with joy and tenderness and willing to make a long term commitment and the necessary sacrifices for the child’s health and well being. When parents and other family members consciously assume this responsibility, the home stimulates effective development of attitudes and values which are important to family living and which will be reflected in school and community behaviors. These examples set by parents, religious leaders, teachers, and community leaders have a profound influence on the kind of person a child becomes.

A character education curriculum should include the concepts of responsibility, respect, integrity, compassion, understanding, honesty, justice, empathy, perseverance and courage, and should be developed in the context of the basic values which have personal day-to-day application. These concepts should include:

- Respect for one’s own worth and dignity;
- Respect for parents, teachers and those in authority;
- Development of self-discipline, self-responsibility and civility to others;
- Respect for home, school and community members;
- Respect and understanding of differences in socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, language ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and physical abilities for all individuals;
- Consideration of the rights of the group as well as of the individual;
- Development of integrity, honesty, loyalty, trustworthiness, fairness and compassion;
- Development of self-discipline; and
- Ability to think independently, critically, objectively, and creatively.

Charter Schools

Adopted March 2003 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Education Commission

California State PTA believes charter schools have a valid place in our public school system, because they can provide K-12 students and parents with expanded choices in educational opportunities and may serve as laboratories for programs that can be replicated in other public schools. Public charter schools are most successful when proposed, developed and evaluated in the communities they serve. PTA recognizes that sufficient resources, including facilities, must be provided to charter school students, and to the chartering entity responsible for oversight of charter school performance.
PTA further believes that charter schools must not be operated by for-profit organizations, nor be affiliated with a nonpublic, religious, or home-based school.

PTA believes a charter school must:

- Be located within the same jurisdiction as its chartering district or county office of education.
- Provide a healthy and safe learning environment for all children.
- Not discriminate against any pupil on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, gender, ability or disability, sexual orientation, language or socio-economic status, or immigration status.
- Be publicly funded in a manner that is equitable to and does not reduce resources for other public schools in the chartering entity.
- Be held fiscally and academically accountable to the parents and community by the local chartering entity.
- Be subject to the same conflict of interest laws that bind other public school.
- Be located in facilities that meet state school building code standards and be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Provide a curriculum that is aligned to the California state academic content standards and offers at least the number of instructional minutes as required by the California State Education Code, and require students to meet the state’s minimum requirements for graduation.
- Follow all state and federal assessment and reporting requirements and be held to or exceed the same standards of academic accountability as all other public schools.
- Belong to a Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA) for special education funding purposes and provide special needs students with all services as set forth in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) and 504 accommodations.
- Hire teachers and administrators who meet the same credentialing requirements as those in other California public schools.
- Encourage effective teacher preparation and ongoing professional development.
- Involve parents in meaningful decision-making.
- Maintain current student records, make student records available for inspection by parents and the chartering entity, ensure records follow a student who withdraws or is expelled from a charter school, and notify the chartering entity when a student leaves the charter school for any reason.

Child Abuse

Adopted March 1989 – Reviewed May 2016 – Community Concerns Commission

California State PTA believes children are the future and must be protected from harm. PTA further believes all children are entitled to live and grow in an atmosphere of love and respect, and no child should be subjected to physical, psychological, verbal or sexual abuse. PTA, as the state’s largest child advocacy organization, must assume a leadership role to achieve these goals.

California State PTA advocates:

- Public education about the unmet needs of and public responsibility to children and families;
- Public education about the prevalence, causes, methods of intervention and prevention of child abuse;
- Public education about programs and assistance available to victims and their families;
- Parenting skills workshops and classes for parents and teenagers;
- Public education for children on the identification of abuse and the survival skills they need to learn to be safe;
- Thorough implementation of state laws requiring school districts to provide training for school personnel (including classroom aides, yard duty personnel and custodians) in the identification, prevention, treatment and reporting of child abuse;
- School, law enforcement, courts and social service agencies working cooperatively and acting promptly in handling cases of suspected child abuse;
- Creating adequate laws to protect children from cyber bullying, intended online stalking and using any type of communication device to physically or mentally abuse another child or cause harm;
- Team-building workshops so active members in the community can get acquainted with each other;
- Adequate funding for treatment centers and temporary shelters;
- Adequate funding and staffing for child welfare services programs; and
- Anonymous telephone tip established and advertised for safe public reporting.

Child Care

Adopted March 1989 – Reviewed and deemed relevant
March 2012 – Community Concerns and Family Engagement Commissions

California State PTA believes that provision of quality child care is a shared responsibility of parents/guardians, providers, appropriate governmental agencies, business and industry, and the community at large. PTA also recognizes the need for a wide variety of programs and services to address the diverse child care needs of families throughout the state and the differing needs of children of various ages.

California State PTA believes that the minimum indicators of program quality include:

- A safe, secure, healthy, developmentally appropriate, and stimulating environment (home-, school-, or center-based) that enhances the physical, social-
emotional, linguistic, cultural, creative and cognitive development of all enrolled children;
• A current, valid state child care provider license;
• Facilities appropriate to the type of care and ages of children, including adequate indoor and outdoor space as defined in state licensing requirements;
• Appropriate group sizes and teacher-child ratios;
• Providers who are adequately trained in early childhood education and child development;
• A policy that forbids the use of corporal punishment;
• A written description of programs and services that includes an explanation of developmental appropriateness of activities and materials made available to parents/guardians and concerned agencies;
• An open door policy for parents/guardians and opportunities for family engagement in all aspects of the program, including policy, administration and curriculum; and
• A parent/guardian education program provided by the child care provider or by other qualified agencies.

California State PTA supports:
• Uniform licensing standards for child care centers;
• Background and criminal checks on all personnel, volunteers, and any other adults who may reside in the facility;
• Strengthening of the state’s facility inspection program;
• Child care homes to have liability insurance or a bond covering injury to clients and guests;
• Crisis and natural disaster preparedness checklist given to all parents/guardians and posted at centers;
• Personnel of child day care facilities (day care centers, family day care homes and out of school youth centers) to have current certification in preventive health practices including pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and pediatric first aid;
• High standards for preparation and continuing education of child care teachers and providers, with the state taking a leadership role in providing educational programs for teachers and providers;
• Adequate salaries for child care providers in order to attract and maintain quality personnel;
• Tax incentives for employers to provide on-site or off-site child care and/or related options for employees, including flex time, job sharing and/or use of benefit packages;
• State and federal tax deduction credits for child care costs;
• Increased public and private funding for program improvements and expansions;
• Increased cooperation between government, community, agencies and business in providing for child care services that meet the unique needs of each community;
• Public policy at state and local levels that includes incentives for, and removes obstacles to, employer involvement in addressing the child care needs of working parents/guardians;
• State support of high quality child care, including a wide variety of program types and services;
• School- or community-based child care resource, referral and provider centers that:
  - Serve as referral agencies for child care services within the community;
  - Are resources to support and monitor providers; and
  - Ensure quality care for preschool and school-aged children including children with special needs;
• Monitoring of recreational programs to ensure quality, safety, and adequate supervision of children;
• Policies that provide for and encourage unlimited parent/guardian access to the facility; and
• State leadership in providing parent education and support programs through public schools, community colleges, colleges, universities, and other appropriate organizations and agencies.

Child Victims/Witnesses Rights

Adopted May 1986 – Reviewed and deemed relevant March 2012 – Community Concerns Commission

California State PTA believes it is important to reduce trauma in all phases of a child’s life including trauma caused by actions pursued through the court system. PTA believes it is important to protect the rights of child victims/witnesses at all times including, but not limited to, investigations and courtroom testimony. PTA believes it is important for child victims/witnesses to receive supportive assistance from trained personnel throughout the course of any criminal proceeding.

California State PTA believes that efforts should be made to advocate for and address the needs of child witnesses/victims by:

• Training law enforcement, legal and judicial personnel in appropriate and age-ability-specific procedures for interacting with a child victim/witness in a respectful, compassionate and caring manner;
• Ensuring a child’s right to have access to assignment of a trained child advocate to protect his/her interests;
• Permitting support attendants for the child throughout the court proceedings;
• Providing appropriate treatment services and a list of available resources/referrals;
• Guaranteeing child victims/witnesses the rights of privacy and confidentiality;
• Questioning a child in a manner appropriate to his/her chronological and/or mental age;
• Minimizing the number of interviews and investigations;
• Trying multi-jurisdictional cases in only one jurisdiction;
Advocacy data shows that profits from advertising typically do not district to seek additional sources of revenue. However, cuts to education have California State PTA engaging in commercial activities in public schools, Stude Commercialism in Schools

Adopted January 2010 – Reviewed and deemed relevant February 2015 – Health Commission California State PTA understands there are difficult challenges that families face every day to ensure that a child with chronic illness and other healthcare needs receives appropriate care at school. Many children are coming to school with a broad spectrum of chronic illness and healthcare needs, and the numbers of those children continue to rise. Federal laws mandate that all children are entitled to a free and appropriate educate (FAPE). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), federal, and state laws determine who will provide and how such services will be provided, including – but not limited to – both the assistance with, and the administration of, medications. California State PTA believes that parents and school personnel should be trained and educated on the complexities of disease management for any student suffering from chronic illness. Students spend a large portion of their day at school and it is vital that school staff who come into contact with these students have a thorough understanding of their illness in order to ensure appropriate care. California State PTA supports solutions that enable all children with chronic illness and other healthcare needs to be safe in California schools. All children deserve the safest and most appropriate care, including, but not limited to, administration of medications, from licensed personnel, working within their scope of practice, who can assess and appropriately provide necessary medical services and care according to state law.

Chronic Illness Care in California Schools

Adopted February 2016 – Education Commission California State PTA recognizes that many factors affect a student’s ability to learn. California State PTA further believes that a school operating according to the community school concept with emphasis on the whole child affords an excellent learning environment for children. Community schools are defined as schools that partner with non-profits and government agencies to provide services at the school site for health, safety, behavior and social services for children, parents and community members. California State PTA believes that community schools should be run by a knowledgeable coordinator and include a shared decision making process.

Types of services include:
• medical and dental care
• mental health care
• enrichment activities and tutoring
• truancy programs
• multiple pathways to graduation and alternatives to high school completion.
• parent programs such as English as a second language, parenting, adult literacy, computer literacy, and financial literacy
• job training and career counseling for adults and youth
• programs that support the needs of our most vulnerable populations

California State PTA believes that providing these services at the community school site will strengthen the community, increase family engagement, make the most effective use of services, and result in improved educational outcomes for children

“Community Schools” as referenced in this position statement are comprehensive community schools with integrated services and should be distinguished from community day schools as described in Education Code 486660-48926.

**Credentialled School Personnel**

*Adopted March 1984 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Education Commission*

California State PTA believes all students shall have access to well prepared, effective, and highly qualified teachers, administrators and certified staff in the public schools of California. PTA supports high standards for all credentialled school personnel working with students beginning with quality comprehensive preparation programs for both teachers and administrators. PTA believes that in order to attract and retain qualified people to teaching, high standards must be accompanied by competitive salaries, support services and ongoing professional development.

PTA believes there must be:

- Increased capacities of universities to prepare sufficient numbers of certificated teachers for public schools;
- Careful screening of candidates for all credential programs at institutions of higher education to ensure that candidates demonstrate a strong potential for teaching;
- Emphasis on quality training programs for each level of credentialing;
- Training in strategies for working with parent/guardians and the community to encourage their full participation in the educational process as an integral part of all teacher/administrator certification programs;
- An emphasis on recruiting candidates with a willingness to work with the diverse constituencies, challenges and needs of California’s public schools;
- Teachers and administrators who reflect California’s diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds;
- Pre-intern and intern programs for prospective teacher credential candidates that provide guidance, counseling and support services by assigned mentors;
- Alternative methods of certification that ensure quality of instruction by requiring applicants to meet initial competency requirements and to complete an equivalent course of teacher preparation within a specified time period;
- Background checks in the hiring and assignment processes for all credentialled school personnel;
- Work assignments based on the subject of a teacher’s credential, determined by such processes that are compatible with preserving the integrity of the instructional program;
- Appropriate support for beginning teachers and administrators;
- A requirement that all credentialled school personnel meet standards for ethical behavior and demonstrate respect for students and others;
- An understanding that employment is contingent upon meeting clearly established performance standards and fulfillment of continued professional growth requirements;
- Ongoing constructive and systematic evaluation programs for all credentialled school personnel;
- Appropriate staff development for all credentialled school personnel that will answer the professional needs of the individual and the individual school site;
- Certification programs and ongoing staff development that enables teachers and administrators to work effectively with all parents/guardians and with service providers to meet the needs of our diverse student population;
- More options available to paraprofessionals and subject matter experts who are actively seeking proper certification;
- A longer instructional school year and instructional school day to provide increased time for both staff development and for student-teacher contact/instructional time; and
- Practical experience/application required during the undergraduate courses.

**Delinquency Prevention**

*Adopted March 1974 – Reviewed and deemed relevant March 2012 – Community Concerns Commission*

California State PTA believes that every child should have the opportunity to become a self-respecting, contributing member of society. For a variety of reasons, some children find themselves “at risk” and as a result, the normal sequence of events for living a law-abiding life is threatened.

In order to assist these “at risk” children and youth, delinquency prevention programs must be developed and implemented in communities. Programs should invest in effective locally-based strategies and expand opportunities for youth to participate in structured activities with adult supervision outside school hours.

Reducing delinquency and youth violence should be the primary goal of any prevention program. Every effort should be made to develop and implement delinquency prevention programs that enhance the living environment by fostering positive social interaction, encouraging strong bonding within the family and creating attachments within the community.

Many different approaches can work to prevent delinquency. Specifically, prevention programs should:
• Address the highest priority problem areas, at appropriate developmental stages, and identify strengths (risk factors and protective factors) to which children in a particular community are exposed;

• Focus most strongly on populations exposed to a number of risk factors;

• Address multiple risk factors in multiple settings, such as family, schools and peer groups;

• Offer comprehensive interventions across many systems, including health and education, and deal simultaneously with many aspects of juveniles’ lives;

• Provide intensive contact with at-risk juveniles, often involving multiple contacts per week or even on a daily basis;

• Build on juveniles’ strengths and create opportunities for physical, social, mental and emotional development that fosters the expansion of positive self-esteem;

• Deal with juveniles in the context of their relationship to and with others, rather than focus solely on the individual;

• Include the participation of parents and/or guardians in development and implementation and contain a component of parental education, support and information on how to deal with “at risk” children and;

• Utilize the available community intervention programs through coordinated cooperative endeavors with law enforcement and social service agencies.

California State PTA believes that through a responsive network of community-based services the obstacles faced by our most vulnerable children and their families can be overcome, their needs can be met and they can flourish as responsible, contributing members of society.

Education of English Language Learners†

*Adopted November 1985 – Revised April 2015 – Education Commission*

California State PTA believes English language learners must be provided an education that will allow them the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to realize their full potential.

California State PTA further believes:

• The primary purpose of any language acquisition program for limited- and non-English speaking students should be to make a successful transition into English so they may progress well in the regular education program;

• The accurate assessment of each student’s English and native language and academic skills is necessary to ensure placement in the program that best meets the educational needs of that student;

• English Language Learners should be served by appropriately credentialed staff;

• Appropriate staff development opportunities, including a multicultural component, should be provided locally to assist teachers who instruct limited- and non-English speaking students;

• Local school districts must develop policies for and methods of achieving the above goals, and allocate adequate resources to assure that students can achieve proficiency, and advocate for additional state and federal funds if those resources are inadequate;

• Local school districts should evaluate their language acquisition programs and reclassification procedures and rates regularly. The findings should be reported to parents and the community;

• Parents have the right and the responsibility to participate in all decisions regarding the placement of their children in any program and must have recourse to an appeals process; and

• Adequate, objective and language-appropriate information should be available to parents so they can make informed decisions and be effective partners in their children’s education.

† See related position statements: Funding of Mandated Programs: Effect on Public Education.

Education: Higher Education

*Adopted April 2005 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Education Commission*

California State PTA believes that California’s system of public higher education, including community colleges, the California colleges, the California State University, and the University of California, plays a critical role in the economic and cultural vitality of our state and nation. Investment in students’ postsecondary education enriches the lives of all Californians, and provides skilled workers to meet the needs of California’s global economy.

PTA strongly believes that every student who meets the established eligibility requirements must be allowed access to the appropriate level of California’s system of higher education; financial hardship should not prohibit eligible students from attending institutions of higher education and efforts should be made to provide financial assistance to students.

PTA supports increasing the number and amount of state and federal grants for students facing financial hardships, simplifying the application process for all forms of financial aid, improving the access to information on postsecondary financial aid, and expanding access to in-state tuition levels for California residents.

PTA further believes that schools and colleges should work together to facilitate articulation from secondary to higher education.

California State PTA recognizes that California’s institutions of higher education are vital to preparing qualified educators for California’s public schools. Californians must ensure that public schools of education have the resources to produce the teachers and administrators needed to staff pre-K through grade 12 public schools, and to prepare experts in the field of teaching and learning.
California State PTA supports adequate funding for California’s system of higher education to ensure that eligible students have access to a higher education and that California provides the qualified educators needed for our public schools.

**Education: Opposing Vouchers, Tuition Tax Credits and Deductions as Systems of Education Aid**

*Adopted November 1991 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Education Commission*

California State PTA opposes any education voucher proposal that would divert public funds to private schools. California State PTA also opposes tuition tax credits and deductions for elementary and secondary school tuition and other education-related expenses. These funding methods would have a detrimental effect on our public school system.

California State PTA recognizes that changes must be made within the public schools to provide an equitable and excellent educational opportunity for every child. However, vouchers, tax credits, deductions and other diversions of public funds do not provide the means for bringing about improvements in our public schools.

California State PTA supports our system of public education as the major vehicle for preparing children for the future perpetuating the basic values of a democratic system of government. This system must be strengthened, must continue to be accountable to the public and must be supported by adequate public funds.

**Education: Parental Choice in Public Schools**

*Adopted January 1989 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Education Commission*

California State PTA believes it is important for parents, educators, and community members to acknowledge that no one educational program is best for all students. Schools and parents together must address the different ways students learn and how the public school system can provide the best education for all students. PTA supports public education, and has historically opposed and continues to oppose any tuition tax credit system or voucher that would allow public funds to flow to private/parochial schools.

PTA supports parental choice within the public school system. Parental choice may be defined as giving parents the right to select their children’s schools from among a range of possible options. California State PTA believes options can be created within the public school system. PTAs should work with their local school districts in seeking creative ways of providing alternative programs. PTA believes that parental choice should be based on the educational needs of individual students with consideration for the child care needs of families.

Any system of “choice” supported by California State PTA must meet the following criteria:

- Availability of adequate and objective information, in a variety of languages as needed, about all public schools so that parents can make informed decisions about their children’s schooling;
- Student admission is based on a fair, equitable and timely process at all schools;
- Equal access to educational opportunities including standards based curriculum and instruction, and high expectations for student achievement;
- Racial/ethnic/socioeconomic diversity of receiving or sending schools/school districts must be considered and maintained; and
- Parents have opportunities for meaningful involvement in their children’s schools.

PTA encourages parents to work with their school districts to develop enriching educational opportunities and instructional programs for all students.

**Education: Support of Public Education**

*Adopted October 1991 – Revised April 2015 – Education Commission*

PTA supports and encourages excellence in public education and has since its founding in 1897. California State PTA believes that public education provides a common experience for building and maintaining a commitment to the basic values of a democratic system of government. A strong public education system is vital to California’s well-being in a global society.

California State PTA believes that three key components to excellence in our public system of education are parental and community involvement, competent and caring educators, and adequate funding.

California State PTA supports strong family engagement programs in all public schools. Research shows the more involved parents and community members become in working with and supporting their schools, the higher the quality of education and the greater the opportunity for student success.

California State PTA believes that educational opportunities for students are dependent on the quality of instructional programs and personnel. California State PTA supports professional excellence of teachers and administrators in their preparation, recruitment, professional development and retention.

California State PTA recognized that excellence in education will cost money. All levels of government, local, state and federal, must share in providing adequate funding for our schools.

In order to strengthen our public schools and provide every student with an equitable and excellent education, California State PTA believes that parents, students, and educators have rights and responsibilities that must be preserved and exercised. These groups must work together to ensure that:
• The community sustains a viable public school system;
• Parents have the opportunity for involvement in their children’s school;
• Appropriate transportation is provided for students to ensure equity;
• Specialized schools provide for a fair selection process;
• Adequate, objective and language-appropriate information must be made available to parents so they can make informed decisions and be effective partners in their children’s education.

Strengthening the public schools requires that all Californians work together and provide support for our public school system. The priority of California must be children and public education.

Education: The Early Years, Ages 3 to 6

_Adopted March 1988 – Revised April 2015 – Education Commission_

California State PTA recognizes the significant positive or negative impact early education experiences have on a child’s self-esteem, social competence and readiness to achieve academically. It is at this time in their lives that children acquire their knowledge about the physical and social worlds in which they live.

California State PTA believes that all children ages three to six should have the opportunity to experience early childhood education that is developmentally appropriate. There are certain components that are essential to any early education program if children are to become successful learners.

These components include, but are not limited to:

• An age-appropriate curriculum that provides physical, intellectual, social and emotional experiences for the individual child;
• Teachers with specialized early childhood training and commitment who understand how young children learn and know how to provide the appropriate curriculum;
• A flexible educational setting where each child’s growth and maturity determines his or her pace for advancement; and
• A strong family engagement component designed to
  – Enable parents to enhance the child’s development at home by providing parents with the knowledge needed to be their child’s first teachers, emphasizing the importance of the first five years on children’s long-term education success;
  – Help parents understand the age-appropriate well-rounded environment and the functions of the varied activities provided at school; and
  – Empower parents as advocates for implementation of an age-appropriate well-rounded educational program for all students.
• Public schools prepared to meet all students’ needs as they enter by collaborating with pre-school programs and parent/guardians in developing transition plans.

California State PTA recognizes on-going fiscal constraints on public education. Therefore, PTA supports the concept that creative solutions can be found to finance education for ages three to six through a combined use of public and private funds.

Education: The Elementary Years, Ages 6 to 10

_Adopted April 1990 – Revised January 2013 – Education Commission_

California State PTA recognizes that children in the primary and elementary grades have an abundance of physical and intellectual energy, and that their physical and emotional growth, intellectual gains and shifting interests vary widely and develop unevenly. With few exceptions, every child is able to learn when his/her individual capability is recognized and his/her developing self-concept is carefully nurtured.

California State PTA believes that the elementary school must provide the environment, resources and structure that will enable each child to be a successful learner and to develop a positive self-image. Schools must effectively align standards; curriculum, assessment and accountability to ensure that each student achieves maximum potential;

• A challenging and integrated curriculum that allows children to be engaged actively in the learning process;
• Academic activities that lead to understanding of course content while encouraging proficiency in basic skills and development of critical thinking skills;
• A comprehensive arts education curriculum;
• Flexible teaching strategies and flexible groupings that include children with varying achievement and ability levels, as appropriate, to ensure that each student achieves maximum potential;
• Intervention strategies including counseling, and appropriate resources to provide needed assistance for students identified as not meeting grade-level Common Core State Standards;
• Activities that teach students to become responsible members of the community;
• Strategies and resources to help every student develop a positive self-image and to combat the causes of at-risk behaviors; decrease the likelihood of dropping out; and
• Family engagement that emphasizes
  – Communication and collaboration with school staff in order to develop mutual understanding;
  – An understanding of the “parent as partner” role in areas such as homework, school progress, testing programs, academic and career planning; and
– Empowering parents to be advocates for their own children’s educational needs.

**Education: The Middle Years, Ages 10 to 14**

*Adopted January 1989 – Revised February 2014 – Education Commission*

California State PTA recognizes that young adolescents have special needs. Early adolescence is a time of rapid physical, emotional, social, and intellectual changes. These years serve as a transition, the vital link between childhood and older adolescence. California State PTA believes that schools for the middle grades must:

- Address the personal developmental needs of adolescent students in order to open the way for academic achievement and to provide a successful transition from elementary to middle grades to high school;
- Have a commitment to and a sincere concern for its students;
- Create a student centered environment where staff encourages each individual student to feel a sense of connectedness to the school;
- Provide students access to high quality, standards-based core curriculum;
- Provide a nurturing environment with ready access to counseling;
- Create and sustain a safe and healthy school environment; and
- Create opportunities for families to support the learning process at home and at school.

PTA further believes there are certain components that are essential to middle grade educational programs including, but not limited to:

- A configuration that groups grades 6, 7, and 8 or the creation of a “school-within-a-school” for those grades;
- A daily schedule that allows for blocks of instructional time to accommodate interdisciplinary team teaching and the integration of core curriculum subjects in groupings with instruction that meets the academic needs of all students;
- A credentialed staff (teachers, counselors and administrators) which
  - Is committed to working with middle grade students;
  - Is qualified to teach young adolescents and who has been specially prepared for assignments to the middle grades;
  - Implements instructional programs that enhance the intellectual and emotional development of all students.
- A variety of staff development options to enable teachers to learn teaching strategies that have proven effective with students of this age group;
- A comprehensive and flexible guidance/counseling plan to help students, with involvement of their parents, develop career and educational goals that is developed with students and their parents;
- A student advisement program, in addition to program counseling services, that provides students a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult throughout the middle grade years to assure continuity in providing advice on academic, personal and peer-relationship matters; and
- A strong parent education/involvement program designed to
  - Help parents understand the physical, social, and intellectual needs of young adolescent students, and how the school may assist in meeting these needs;
  - Assist parents to understand the importance of the development of an educational plan that ensures academic growth and a successful transition from school-to-work;
  - Give parents meaningful roles in school governance;
  - Communicate with families about the school program and students’ progress; and

PTA further believes that all education stakeholders are accountable for ensuring every child has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential.

**Education: The High School Years, Ages 14 to 18**

*Adopted April 1991 – Reviewed and deemed relevant February 2016 – Education Commission*

California State PTA believes the future of our country depends upon how well we educate our students. We must ensure that all students, English and non-English speaking, have equal access to academically rigorous instructional programs that foster the ability to think critically and solve problems. Students should leave high school with a body of knowledge that opens the door to continued education, the world of work and lifelong learning. We must prevent students from dropping out of school. High schools must offer the most comprehensive and diversified education possible.

California State PTA believes family engagement should not end when the student enters high school. It is vital that parents must continue to take an active role in helping their child succeed.

Therefore, California State PTA supports a strong family engagement component with school practices that are designed to:

- Welcome and empower parents, to work collaboratively with students, teachers and administrators to make decisions and to share in setting the goals and direction of the school, thus promoting improved curriculum, better teaching and high student achievement;
• Assist parents, teachers and administrators in communicating and becoming aware of one another’s roles regarding student achievement; and

• Provide multiple opportunities for parents and students to access the resources on graduation requirements, college entrance requirements and career opportunities.

The capability to build a student's sense of belonging is a fundamental step in shaping a high school. A sense of belonging can help to instill values and improve learning. Certain components are essential to effective high school education programs.

These include but are not limited to:

• A belief by teachers, administrators and counselors that every student has the ability to learn and will be encouraged to achieve his or her highest potential;

• Student access to high quality standard based core curriculum, advanced level courses and the arts;

• A high quality, diverse instructional program whose delivery allows students to make connections between classroom learning and its application to real life situations;

• Teachers who use relevant innovative instructional strategies that engage students in active learning that prepares them with the knowledge and life skills they need to be productive, contributing adults;

• Counseling and guidance assistance to help students make informed decisions that meet their individual needs;

• A setting that allows for alternatives to the traditional school;

• Effective high school drop out prevention and intervention programs to provide:
  – Collaboration with community agencies;
  – Community service and effective co-curricular activities;
  – School-business partnerships and internships;
  – Classes in life skills to prepare students for parenthood, for decision-making, and recognizing the consequences of choices;
  – Diversity awareness integrated into the curriculum;
  – Opportunities for all students to have access throughout the curriculum to the study of technology, its applications, and the use of technology as a tool;
  – Opportunities for career technical education to serve the needs of all students‡;
  – School opportunities for students to participate in community service;
  – Quality co-curricular and extra curricular activities and programs, such as but not limited to athletics, visual, performing arts or leadership training.

†See related position statement: School-to-Career Technical Education.

Energy Conservation
Adopted May 1981 – Reviewed and deemed relevant January 2011 – Community Concerns Commission

California State PTA recognizes that present conditions necessitate the development of alternative sources, conservation, and the setting of priorities for uses of energy. Decisions regarding the type and location of alternative energy sources have environmental, social, political, and economic consequences in communities. In the search for and development of energy alternatives, environmental factors must be balanced with energy needs to ensure present and future generations their right to live in a safe and healthy community.

California State PTA believes:

• Alternative sources of energy should be encouraged. PTAs at all levels should promote public awareness programs to keep their members and the community informed about current technological advances and proposed sites for energy generating facilities;

• The PTA should work with other community groups in developing the awareness, knowledge and skills necessary to participate intelligently in the solution of short- and long-term energy problems;

• Each school should be urged to set an example of energy awareness, conservation and management;

• The PTA should encourage participation in communitywide public awareness education regarding the benefits of recycling; and

• Schools should be encouraged to implement the Education Code provisions concerning environmental instruction designed to teach students to value and conserve natural resources.

Energy Drink and Coffee Beverage Awareness
Adopted January 2009 – Reviewed and deemed relevant May 2016 – Health Commission

California State PTA encourages parents to learn more about the short and long term effects of caffeine on the health and well-being of children and youth. Caffeine drinks are everywhere, promising to keep a person energized, revved, and alert. But labels don’t have to reveal how much caffeine the products pack. Safe limits of caffeine consumption are still being studied.

Energy drinks are usually a mixture of caffeine, guarana, taurine, carbohydrates, B-Complex and gluconolactone. These as well as coffee beverages have become very popular with children and youth in recent years. Caffeine itself is not a harmful substance, however, taken in large amounts it can be considered dangerous.

Research is finding that caffeine-laden drinks could be stopping children’s brains from developing properly. By preventing deep sleep, caffeine interferes with the development of the brain during adolescence. This is a critical time for the brain, when problems in development can lead to schizophrenia, anxiety, drug use, and personality disorders.
Health concerns may include:

- Dental erosion
- High blood pressure
- Gastrointestinal disorder
- Shakes, tremors and chills
- Nausea and vomiting
- Agitation
- Disruption in the classroom
- Dehydration
- Dizziness
- Irregular heart beat

Energy drink labels often state that they are not recommended for children, but sales of the drinks are not restricted by age as are products that contain tobacco and alcohol. California State PTA believes it is important for parents to monitor and understand the effects of energy drinks and coffee beverages on children and youth.

### Environmental Health and Environmental Education

*Adopted March 2007 – Revised January 2017 – Education and Health Commissions*

California State PTA believes all children and youth have the right to live and attend school in a healthy environment free from avoidable environmental hazards.

California State PTA seeks to educate its members to recognize the importance of a healthy environment and the potential dangers that environmental contamination poses for children’s developing minds and bodies. PTA supports the implementation of a comprehensive K-12 environmental education curriculum for all students.

Children are at an increased risk of cancer, neurobehavioral impairment, and other health problems as a result of exposure to both active and inert ingredients in pesticides. California State PTA believes that pesticides are by nature poisons, and exposure even at low levels may cause serious adverse health effects. Children, because of their higher metabolism, their developing organs and life-systems, and their play behavior patterns, are particularly vulnerable to the health impact of pesticides. To protect the environment and human health, PTA urges its members to become knowledgeable about the environmental conditions in their schools and communities and about current efforts to protect or improve the local environment, both indoors and out.

PTAs are urged to work with their local school health councils and school wellness programs to develop and implement tools that will help them assess and address unhealthy environmental conditions in schools and communities. Such conditions may include indoor air quality, high lead levels in water, exposures to pesticide drift in agricultural communities, and proximity to waste incinerators.

California State PTA supports the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). This program does not prohibit all use of pesticides, but rather seeks to:

- Minimize exposure to pesticides;
- Emphasize non-chemical pest control methods;
- Address the causes of pest infestation;
- Require that a common-sense, environmentally sensitive approach to pest prevention be implemented; and
- Implement a basic four-step process of inspection, monitoring and recording, determining and documenting treatment, and evaluating results.

IPM is an ecosystem-based strategy that focuses on long-term prevention of pests or their damage through a combination of techniques such as biological control, habitat manipulation, modification of cultural practices, and use of resistant varieties. Pesticides are used only after monitoring indicates they are needed according to established guidelines, and treatments are made with the goal of removing only the target organism. Pest control materials are selected and applied in a manner that minimizes risks to human health, beneficial and non-target organisms, and the environment.

California State PTA recognizes that protecting the environment and human health is a complex, interconnected and perpetual endeavor. PTA encourages schools, families, and communities to support environmental decision-making processes that are open to all and that are based on stewardship of the environment and concern for the people who live in it, especially the most vulnerable, our children.

California State PTA urges its unit, council and district PTAs to advocate for safer environments in and around schools by:

- Supporting efforts at the federal, state, and local levels to eliminate the environmental health hazards caused by pesticide use;
- Encouraging governmental bodies to regulate the use of pesticides in order to maximize state and local control;
- Encouraging long-term solutions for the control of pests that will significantly lower children’s exposure to harmful chemicals by using the least toxic combination of pest control strategies; and
- Supporting “right-to-know” legislation and regulations in order for parents and the community to be more aware of the environmental health hazards associated with the use of pesticides.

### Equal Rights

*Adopted 1983 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Legislation Committee*

California State PTA believes all children and youth should have equal opportunities to develop and reach their maximum potential. California State PTA is dedicated to the principles of equal justice, equal privileges, equal opportunities and equal responsibilities.
for all individuals in every phase of life. Therefore, California State PTA supports equal rights for all.

Evaluation of Teachers

*Adopted March 2011 – Reviewed and deemed relevant February 2016 – Education Commission*

California State PTA believes that every student deserves highly qualified and effective teachers, so that all students can learn and develop critical skills that prepare them to be college- and workforce-ready. California State PTA believes that the evaluation of teachers should measure both student learning and teacher effectiveness.

California State PTA believes that meaningful teacher evaluation should be transparent and provide all teachers with clear expectations and regular feedback that helps them grow as professionals.

Any teacher evaluation system should establish clear criteria and measures that must be included in all teacher evaluation systems, should allow individual school districts the flexibility to devise a system that meets the needs of their pupils, teachers, administrators and parents.

The evaluation process should consist of multiple measures available to the public to determine teacher effectiveness through student academic performance, and identify areas in need of professional development and teacher support.

Multiple measures should include, but are not limited to:

- Formative and summative assessment of student performance, district and state tests, classroom work, class room participation, student grades, and student projects and portfolios.
- Evidence of high expectations, high student performance and engagement.
- Evidence that teachers are engaging parents and guardians in the student’s education.
- Affirmation that there is differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners.
- Evidence of culturally responsive instruction to meet the needs of all students to help eliminate the achievement gap.
- Affirmation of teacher collaboration through professional learning communities, articulation between grade levels, and participating in ongoing staff development.
- Teacher self-assessment based on state, district and county office standards.
- Multiple types of observations by the designated administrator, including but not limited to: formal and informal classroom visits, one-on-one discussion with the teacher, classroom materials and course of study review, and parent and student feedback.
- Evidence that there is consistent collaboration with staff, parents/guardians, students and administrators.

California State PTA believes that the evaluation of teachers must occur in a planned, regular, and ongoing manner that promotes teacher competency and effectiveness, and student academic growth.

Fair Housing

*Adopted May 1981 – Reviewed and deemed relevant May 2016 – Community Concerns Commission*

California State PTA believes:

- All families need to have access to safe and affordable housing;
- There is necessity for enactment and enforcement of laws to end discrimination in the marketing, sale and/or rental of housing;
- Encouragement should be given to the formation of broadly based community action groups to promote citizen understanding of housing issues and involvement in advocating programs that will meet the housing needs in their communities; and
- Encouragement should be given to the development of rental and individually owned homes for low- and moderate-income families and that such housing should not be isolated within local communities.

PTAs should encourage city councils, county boards of supervisors, and city and county housing authorities to:

- Adopt and implement balanced community policies that stipulate a mix of housing types as well as provisions for the development of housing for low- and moderate-income families;
- Develop and implement programs utilizing all available funding sources to provide rental and individually owned single- and multi-family housing for low- and moderate-income families.

Family Engagement in Credentialing Programs

*Adopted February 2012 – Family Engagement Commission*

California State PTA recognizes there is a direct correlation between family engagement and student achievement. Research and studies over the past 20 years have definitively shown that when administrators and teachers engage parents in the educational process, significant growth occurs in student learning.

California State PTA therefore believes that partnerships between parents, professional educators, and community will significantly impact closing the achievement gap; reducing retention rates; decreasing dropout and truancy rates; increasing graduation rates; and improving the health of students and their families. For all students to achieve their potential, regardless of their cultural background, socioeconomic status, or learning challenges, requires a partnership between families, communities, and professional educators.

California was the first state to enact legislation (AB 1264 Martinez, Chapter 767, Statutes of 1993) calling for
California State PTA believes that children should not be deprived or penalized because of the family situation in which they live.

California State PTA supports:

- Coordination of health, welfare and educational services to meet family needs;

**Family Planning**

*Adopted January 1966 – Revised April 2017 – Family Engagement Commission*

California State PTA believes there should be equal access to family planning guidance and services regardless of the economic or geographic circumstances of any family or individual. PTA further believes persons seeking family planning should be able to receive those services compatible with their beliefs and needs.

According to the United Nations, access to safe, voluntary family planning is a human right and is central to gender equality, women’s empowerment and poverty reduction. Family planning services are defined as "educational, comprehensive medical or social activities that enable individuals, including minors, to determine freely the number and spacing of their children and to select the means by which this may be achieved".

Therefore, PTA supports equal access to family planning guidance and services because of its importance to the health and welfare of parents and children and for the economic security of the family.

**Family Responsibility and Accountability**

*Adopted March 1989 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2017 – Family Engagement Commission*

California State PTA believes all children and youth are entitled to equal privileges, equal justice, and equal opportunities. In order for children to develop into mature, productive adult citizens, PTA believes they need:

- Stability in their family settings;
- Physical and emotional support conducive to healthy growth and development;
- Financial support to meet basic needs and, to the extent possible within the family’s means, to enrich the child’s development.

California State PTA believes the family is the basic unit in our society responsible for the support and nurturing of children. PTA further believes that both parents/guardians, whether living together or apart, have joint responsibility to support and educate their children, and to promote optimal development of each child. This means:

- Support of children until age 18;
- Support of children (until age 22) who are unmarried or otherwise unemancipated and who are students in good standing, attending high school or an accredited institution for higher learning or vocational training.

PTA supports programs that hold parents/guardians accountable for meeting these responsibilities.

**Family Services**

*Adopted May 1966 – Reviewed and deemed relevant March 2012 – Community Concerns Commission*

California State PTA believes that children should not be deprived or penalized because of the family situation in which they live.

California State PTA supports:

- Coordination of health, welfare and educational services to meet family needs;
• Programs that provide education and training to enhance parenting skills to meet the needs of individual families;
• Services that enable children with special needs to take advantage of all educational opportunities;
• Services for children whose parents are incapacitated or temporarily absent from the home, who have been separated from their families;
• Programs and services for individuals and families who are touched by the juvenile justice and foster care systems; and
• Full funding for mandated programs.

California State PTA believes every child has the right to be provided the opportunity to become a self-respecting, contributing member of society.

**Firearms and Assault Weapons**

*Adopted July 1990 – Reviewed and deemed relevant May 2016 – Community Concerns Commission*

California State PTA has a long history and proud tradition of supporting legislation and programs for the safety and protection of children, youth, and families. California State PTA supports state and federal legislation and restrictions that would:

- Require a firearm licensure procedure that includes a waiting period and background check to screen out illegal firearm purchasers such as convicted felons and drug-related offenders;
- Require a firearm licensing procedure that includes proof of passing a state-certified course in appropriate firearms use and safe handling practice;
- Require safety devices, including childproof trigger locks, on all firearms offered for sale, delivery or transfer;
- Prohibit sale and possession of assault weapons for non-military/non-law enforcement use and require a registration process for those persons who now legally own such firearms;
- Prohibit for non-military/non-law enforcement purposes, the manufacture, importation, possession, sale or resale of accessories and ammunition designed for assault weapons;
- Ban the manufacture, sale or possession of "junk guns"/Saturday night specials;
- Ban armor-piercing ammunition;
- Control the illegal possession of firearms and other lethal weapons on school campuses.

California State PTA further supports:

- Education programs to inform parents and community members about the harm and injury handgun violence inflicts on children and youth;
- Public awareness campaigns regarding the importance of legislation for the safety and protection of the public, especially children and youth;
- Efforts to seek and support legislation on the safety and protection of the public, including children and youth.

**Foster Children/Youth and Foster Families**

*Adopted May 2013 – Community Concerns Commission*

California State PTA believes stability is integral to a child's quality of life and believes that even more than for other children, society has a responsibility, along with parents, for the well-being of children in foster care. Citizens are responsible for acting to ensure their welfare.

Every child in foster care is endowed with the rights inherently belonging to all children. In addition, because of the temporary or permanent separation from, and loss of, parents and other family members, the child requires special safeguards, resources, and care.

In order to facilitate the foster child's inherent rights, California State PTA believes that the foster family has the right:

- To be treated with dignity, respect, trust and consideration as a primary provider of foster care and a member of the professional team caring for foster children;
- To be provided a current explanation and understanding of the role of the Child Welfare department and the role of the members of the child's birth family in the child's foster care with updates as case plan evolves;
- To continue their own family values and routines; that every effort will be made by the Child Welfare department to work with the foster parents to place a child who can participate in and benefit from established family customs and routines;
- To be provided training and support by the Child Welfare department for the purpose of improving skills in providing daily care and meeting the special needs of the child in foster care;
- To be provided training by the Child Welfare department for obtaining support and information concerning a better understanding of the rights and responsibilities of the foster parent(s);
- To review, prior to placement, written information concerning the child and allow the foster parent(s) to assist in determining if such child would be a proper placement for the prospective foster family. For emergency placements where time does not allow prior review of such information, the Child Welfare department shall provide information as it becomes available;
- To obtain all biographical and medical information on a child prior to or at the time of placement;
To refuse placement of a child in the foster home or request the removal of the child from the foster home without reprisal;

To obtain timely financial reimbursement;

To help plan visitation with a child’s parents and siblings;

To receive notice of Child Welfare department plans or court proceedings affecting a child’s placement;

To have priority consideration when a foster child becomes available for adoption, and;

To be provided a fair and timely investigation of foster home complaints and an ability to appeal decisions of the placement board.

**Freedom to Learn**

*Adopted January 1966 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Education Commission*

In a free society, public schools, universities, colleges and libraries exist, in part, for the development and exchange of ideas. California State PTA believes these institutions can accomplish this objective only by assuming their responsibility to provide opportunities for each individual to rid himself of the bonds of ignorance and the restrictions of prejudice, without intimidation.

California State PTA believes:

- Schools and colleges should offer a wide range of learning experiences appropriate to the student’s intellectual, physical and emotional maturity;

- Libraries, technology and all other types of instructional resources should be adequate in quality and quantity to provide for scholarly research;

- An educational environment should stimulate full investigation of all aspects of a subject with freedom of inquiry and freedom of discussion;

- Full opportunity should be provided for each individual to determine his own opinions.

PTA is concerned that the development of positive attitudes and deep understanding be based on factual information and fundamental concepts. Education should be free from the kinds of emotional pressures which tend to restrict freedom of reason and choice.

**Funding of Mandated Programs: Effect on Public Education†**

*Adopted March 1983 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Education Commission*

California State PTA believes it is essential to appropriate adequate resources to fully fund all mandated programs and services. Since school districts are legally obligated to implement all mandates, enactment of such laws without sufficient funds for total implementation imposes severe fiscal constraints on the overall educational program of the district.

†See related position statements: Education of English Language Learners; and Special Education.

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**Gang Awareness**

*Adopted May 1989 – Revised May 2016 – Community Concerns Commission*

California State PTA recognizes the harmful impact of gangs on our children and youth. Gang participation is increasing at an alarming rate in California. Gangs include young people from all socio-economic levels and membership crosses gender lines.

Throughout California, gang members recruit, threaten, harass, coerce intimidate and manipulate children into joining gangs. Gangs usually lead children to adopt negative behavioral changes. Children and youth who join gangs often become involved in criminal activities.

Early intervention and education is the first and most important step in awareness of gangs and gang activities. Students, parents and educators armed with such basic knowledge are better able to prevent children from joining gangs.

PTA advocates:

- Creation of meaningful jobs for youth and places or activities that offer a positive sense of belonging;

- Educating students, parents and educators about gangs; reasons why youth join, recognition of gang characteristics and symbols in their community, current trends and how to steer their children away from gangs;

- The adoption and the implementation of school district policies designed to protect children, youth, and staff from gangs;

- Developing community partnerships to mobilize local actions and resources to create positive alternatives to gang involvement; and

- Partnering with local law enforcement agencies to obtain current information.

**Health Care Access for Children, Youth, Pregnant Women, and Their Families**

*Adopted March 1992 – Reviewed and deemed relevant February 2014 – Health Commission*

California State PTA understands the importance of good health to a child’s quality of life and believes that:

- A child’s health and well-being begin prior to birth;

- Appropriate, timely health care is necessary for each child to have the opportunity to develop to his or her fullest potential, both physically and mentally; and

- Children, youth, pregnant women and their families are entitled to appropriate, confidential, and timely health care.

California State PTA recognizes that:

- A child’s ability to learn is directly related to his or her state of health and that inadequate health care can be a barrier to education;
• Basic preventive health care can prevent permanent disability or lengthy remediation, and is a cost-effective use of health care dollars; and

• Current statistics indicate that many children and families in the United States have no health insurance, either public or private.

California State PTA supports efforts to provide equal access to quality, affordable basic preventive health care for all children, youth, pregnant women, and their families.

Health Education


California State PTA is concerned for the health and well-being of all children and youth. California State PTA believes that comprehensive health education is essential for each child to develop to his fullest potential. California State PTA believes that comprehensive health education includes physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being.

California State PTA also believes that the home, the school, and the community each bear some responsibility for the health of all children and youth. This shared responsibility should provide:

• Comprehensive health education for all children and youth;†

• School curriculum and instruction related to good health and prevention of disease;

• Children and youth with the ability to make intelligent decisions that will develop and maintain good health habits;

• An awareness of individual, family, and community health needs; and

• Statewide health standards, accountability and testing.

California State PTA believes that a strong, comprehensive program of health education taught by qualified personnel should be an integral part of the core school curriculum.

† PTA supports the right of a parent to be notified about any course of study regarding sex education and to review the curriculum materials to be used. PTA further supports the right of a parent/guardian to request in writing that his/her student be excused from such a course of study.

Homeless Families/Children

Adopted July 1988 – Reviewed and deemed relevant March 2012 – Community Concerns Commission

California State PTA believes:

• All children should have access to safe and affordable housing;

• Shelters should be provided for homeless families and their children regardless of age;

• Government agencies and private enterprise should be encouraged to offer education and retraining programs to help families develop the skills to secure employment that will enable the family to be self-sufficient; and

• Aid should be given to homeless families in securing low-cost housing in the community and in keeping the family intact.

PTAs should encourage city councils, county boards of supervisors, city and county housing authorities, local schools, county offices of education and other local agencies to cooperate in:

• Ensuring that all children have the opportunity to attend school;

• Developing and implementing programs and shelters for the homeless;

• Helping families to secure affordable housing; and

• Offering educational and retraining programs for homeless parents.

Human Relations†

Adopted November 1968 – Reviewed and deemed relevant March 2012 – Community Concerns Commission

California State PTA believes that good human relations must be an important force in working toward the prevention and solution of problems in communities. A high value must be placed on positive, interpersonal communication in which each person is treated with respect and appreciation, regardless of individual differences.

Typical interpersonal behaviors should reflect and support the following values (applicable without regard to differences in respect to rank, class, age, race, gender, disability, or sexual orientation): respect, courtesy/civility, appreciation, empathy, trust, inclusion and consultation.

The United States is a product of immigration and the cultural pluralism of its people. It consists of a multitude of diverse ethnic, racial and religious groups that share in common American citizenship, a democratic way of life and values which stress the worth and dignity of the individual.

California State PTA welcomes diversity as an opportunity for teaching, developing and promoting multicultural competencies and understanding. Racial, ethnic, gender, sexual identity, disability, religious and other individual or group differences shall not be regarded as hindrances to success. Instead they shall be treated as positive opportunities for improving the quality of life.

The home and school are two of the strongest influences in shaping attitudes of children. All schools must be deeply involved with positive human relations in the education of the child. This concern, however, is not the job of the school alone; all interacting forces in the community must work together. so that each member of society has equal access to opportunities to develop to their full potential.

Human relations impact the future of family and community well-being. Success of individuals, families and communities depends on the type of human
relations that are built. It is essential for PTA at every level to commit its efforts toward building an infrastructure that supports positive human relations in the healthy development of all children.

†See related position statement: Character Education.

Inclusiveness and Diversity†
Adopted April 1991 – Revised April 2008 – Membership Commission
The National Congress of Mothers, irrespective of creed, color or condition, stands for all parenthood, childhood, homehood.

Alice McLellan Birney, 1898, Cofounder of National PTA
Those words, true in 1898, are even truer today. PTAs everywhere must understand and embrace the uniqueness of all individuals, appreciating that each contributes a diversity of views, experiences, cultural heritage/traditions, skills/abilities, values and preferences. When PTAs respect differences yet acknowledge shared commonalities uniting their communities, and then develop meaningful priorities based upon their knowledge, they genuinely represent their communities. When PTAs represent their communities, they gain strength and effectiveness through increased volunteer and resource support.

Conversely, PTAs must recognize that prejudice exists based upon socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, language ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and physical abilities. Such discrimination is hurtful, unfair, hostile and unwelcoming. When PTAs tolerate these acts, they repel members, lack representative leadership, and fail to serve all. Prejudice diminishes a PTA’s ability to advocate effectively for all children, youth and families.

Therefore, California State PTA believes that PTAs at every level must:
• Openly assess beliefs and practices to assure inclusiveness and guard against discrimination;
• Make every effort to create a PTA board and membership that is inclusive and reflective of its community;
• Encourage that all PTA activities at the school be planned by a committee which is representative of the population;
• Foster programs and practices that eliminate bias, prejudice and misunderstanding within their communities;
• Become acquainted with the leaders of the many diverse groups in the community and collaborate with them to increase parent, family and community involvement;
• Educate its leaders and members to the needs, cultural beliefs, traditions and family structures of the population they serve; and
• Propose change wherever discriminatory practices are perceived.

California State PTA values and appreciates diversity, which enriches and strengthens the structure of our society within our state and nation.

†This position statement should be used in its entirety with no portion quoted out of context.

Instructional Materials
Adopted May 1972 – Reviewed and deemed relevant February 2014 – Education Commission
California State PTA believes instructional materials are fundamental to the educational program provided for California’s youth. All students must have access to high-quality, standards-based “instructional materials” that complement curriculum implementation. The California Education Code Section 60010(h) defines instructional materials as “all materials that are designed for use by pupils and their teachers as a learning resource and help students acquire facts, skills, or opinions or develop cognitive processes. Instructional materials may be printed or nonprinted, and may include textbooks, technology-based materials, other educational materials, and tests.” This includes Web-based and electronic textbooks.

California State PTA believes
• Students must be provided with a broad selection of instructional materials in each subject area that are based on local school district curriculum and student needs;
• All materials provided should be in usable condition, in sufficient quantities, available at the beginning of each course of study, and at no cost to students or teachers;
• The governing body of the local school district is legally responsible for the selection of instructional materials;
• Local school districts must have adequate annual resources to meet the costs of textbooks and other instructional materials for California students;
• Local boards of education should adopt policies that encourage the participation of parents/guardians, teachers and members of the community on committees formed for the review and selection of instructional materials;
• Local boards of education should establish a policy to address challenges to instructional materials including the establishment of a broad-based diverse community advisory committee to review challenged materials; and
• State Board of Education approval or adoption of K-8 instructional materials must follow a schedule that allows local school districts adequate time to make choices of adopted or approved materials, have reviews by the public, and have timely distribution of materials to schools.
Juvenile Offenders in the Justice System

Adopted March 1987 – Reviewed and deemed relevant March 2012 – Community Concerns Commission

California State PTA supports a juvenile justice system which emphasizes rehabilitation of juveniles and holds offenders accountable and responsible for their actions. Juvenile court jurisdiction over youth up to age 18 should be retained in any efforts to reform the juvenile justice system.

Juvenile court judges should retain and exercise their discretionary power to refer to adult court those youthful offenders charged with violent crimes as defined in California State Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 707 (covers the fitness of juveniles to be referred to adult court).

California State PTA believes that parents may be held financially responsible for the actions of their children.

The juvenile justice system should provide for:

- Legal protections and safeguards for all juveniles alleged to have committed an offense, ensuring that the rights of crime victims and all interested parties are recognized and enforced;
- Equal treatment of all juveniles without regard to ethnicity or economic status;
- Anonymity of all juveniles alleged to have committed an offense and who remain under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court;
- Confidentiality of court proceedings and records with the stipulation that appropriate juvenile justice officials be required to disclose to law enforcement agencies and school districts the name of any juvenile criminal 14 years or older and who is convicted of a serious or violent crime;
- A program of rehabilitation which includes education, career training, employability and counseling with a component on victim/offender reconciliation;
- Involvement of victims in all aspects of the judicial and correctional system, including appearance at hearings, notification, allocation (right to speak) and restitution;
- A restitution system for victims;
- Alternatives to placement in correctional facilities;
- Community-based education and treatment programs (except for the serious, habitual or violent offenders) to ensure successful re-entry into the community;
- Confinement of juveniles committing offenses as described in section 602 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code when
  - Necessary to protect the offender or the person or property of another;
  - Necessary to ensure that the offender does not flee the jurisdiction of the court; or
  - The offender violates a specific condition of home release or parole; and
- Separation of status offenders (juveniles described in section 601 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code), and juvenile offenders (juveniles described in section 602 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code) from adult inmates when confinement is necessary.

Lead Poisoning

Adopted May 1993 – Reviewed and deemed relevant February 2015 – Health Commission

California State PTA believes that early screening, identification, treatment, and prevention efforts are essential to protect all children from lead poisoning. Children between the ages of six months and six years should be screened using a blood lead test.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, childhood lead poisoning is a major, preventable pediatric health problem today, and it is entirely preventable.

California State PTA recognizes:

- Lead poisoning is a pervasive illness affecting all segments of society;
- Children exposed to lead can have impaired intellectual development;
- The highest risk age for lead poisoning is between one and six years;
- Most children with lead poisoning do not look or act sick;
- The effects of lead in the blood stream are subtle and are often mistaken for some other health or learning problems; and
- Expectant mothers exposed to lead can miscarry or they may have babies with low birthweight and retarded growth and development.

The major sources of lead exposure in children are:

- Peeling or chipping paint and deteriorating lead paint particles in household dust,
- Lead contaminated soil,
- Some home-remedy Medicines,
- Contact with skin or clothing of parents in lead-related occupations or hobbies,
- Lead content in some imported food cans, cookware, and tableware, and
- Tap water, usually from older plumbing with lead-containing connectors.

California State PTA urges parents and others responsible for the health and safety of children to:

- Educate themselves about measures they can employ to prevent lead poisoning
  - See that children have a well-balanced diet which includes iron and calcium;
• Encourage schools and school districts to comply with the recommendations identified in the California Department of Health Services 1998 report, “Lead Hazards in California Public Elementary Schools and Child Care Facilities,” including
  - Compliance with state and federal mandates;
  - Evaluation of the lead content of school drinking water at the outlet;
  - Fencing off or covering bare soils adjacent to painted exterior walls of buildings constructed prior to 1940;
  - Prioritization of deferred maintenance activities to classrooms that house the most vulnerable children;
  - Utilization of the expertise of Department of Health Services certified lead-related construction personnel; and
  - Adoption of and support for the voluntary Lead-safe Schools Program.
† e.g., Azarcon, Greta, Pay-loo-ah, Alkohl or Kohl.

Library Services

*Adopted May 1972 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Education Commission*

California State PTA recognizes the significant contribution to educational enrichment that is provided by both school library/media centers and community (public) libraries. Both serve as centers for teaching many types of research skills as well as recreational purposes for children and adults.

**School Library/Media Centers**

School library/media centers implement and enhance the core curriculum and instructional program adopted by the school and, at the same time, provide for student enrichment and enjoyment. PTAs should work with schools/school districts to ensure that funding school library/media centers is given the priority necessary to maintain the level of services essential to each student’s educational experience.

California State PTA believes that every school library/media center should:

• Be staffed by qualified credentialed personnel who
  - Select appropriate materials and provide activities that support the instructional program;
  - Assist students and staff to become effective users of ideas and information; and
  - Work closely with staff, students and the parent community;
• Meet the needs of all students by teaching the research skills necessary to obtain specific information; and
• Maintain and update print and non-print collections and/or have access to existing information through the use of various technologies.

California State PTA believes that school library/media centers are important to student learning. When budget cuts cause the elimination of full-time credentialed librarian positions, PTAs are encouraged to make every effort to work with their school districts to seek alternative solutions to keep library/media centers open for students’ use.

**Community (Public) Libraries**

California State PTA acknowledges the important role of community libraries. Community libraries supplement school library/media centers by providing broader services for students and by providing expanded opportunities for all children and adults to develop skills for life-long learning. PTAs should work to encourage every community to provide the necessary public and private funds for a total library service that will meet the needs of its population.

California State PTA believes that to provide the highest quality services for all, community libraries should:

• Identify and make available a broad array of services which will meet the needs of the community and keep the community informed about available services;
• Maintain and update print and non-print collections that meet community needs;
• Provide access to information through the use of various technologies;
• Identify and meet special needs within the community by providing qualified staff and selected resources that address these needs;
• Provide programs to eliminate adult illiteracy; and
• Ensure equal access to all services of the library such as special programs for young readers and services for the physically disabled. †

† PTA is sensitive to the serious handicap to the person and family when an individual is unable to read. PTA actively supports school, community and library-based programs to eliminate adult illiteracy.

Lottery Revenue and Public School Funding

*Adopted January 2009 – Reviewed and deemed relevant February 2014 – Education Commission*

California State PTA neither supports nor opposes the use of gambling or gaming to raise funds for the state’s public schools. PTA does recognize that promoters of gaming programs capitalize on the market advantages of linking their gaming enterprises with public education. PTA also recognizes that revenue from the California State Lottery, enacted by a voter-approved initiative in 1984, reinforces a misconception among a significant portion of the voting public that education is “fully-funded” or “taken care of” by the State Lottery, although the Lottery has never contributed more than two percent of California’s statewide funding for education. Further, PTA acknowledges that public schools have come to rely on revenue generated by the State Lottery, but
believes lottery funds allocated to public schools must be used to supplement, never to supplant, the state's financial obligation to education. Lottery funds should never be used for ongoing expenditures and should always be treated as an annual infusion of one-time only funds.

PTA believes any effort to reform or modify the State Lottery should be guided by the principle of protecting education funding and holding it harmless. Any effort to modify the Lottery as part of a State Budget reform should be rational, transparent, and guided by the principle of fiscal responsibility.

PTA opposes efforts to:

• Mandate the purpose for which lottery funds may be spent, other than those purposes contained in the original voter-approved ballot measure, or approved by the State Legislature in conformity with provisions of the ballot measure;

• Divert lottery revenues to any purpose other than public education without identifying another source of revenue for schools to replace lost lottery funds;

• Change the formula for determining the percentage of lottery revenues allocated to school districts if the change would mean a lower percentage of revenues allocated to public schools; or

• Change the method of allocating lottery revenues other than directly from the State Controller's Office to local school districts.

Finally, California State PTA believes that funding public education is an important and noble goal, and a shared public responsibility best accomplished by non-regressive tax policies that include concepts that would provide sufficient revenues to fund quality education programs.

Mass Media and the Family

Adopted May 1974 – Revised October 2012 – Communications Commission

California State PTA recognizes that the mass media exert a powerful influence on American life and make a major impact on the education of children and youth in our culture. Mass media includes materials or websites for reading, listening, viewing or entertainment.

PTA respects the rights of adults to choose their own entertainment and educational fare. However, since young minds are easily influenced, PTA believes that producers of mass media have a responsibility to consider how media messages, images and experiences affect children and youth. PTA encourages such responsibility among producers of mass media and advocates for technological tools and other options for parents to use to control their children's exposure to material parents may find inappropriate for their children.

California State PTA believes parents and the mass media each have a responsibility to provide positive experiences that enrich the lives of children and youth. California State PTA encourages parents to:

• Guide their children in the choice of media products when selecting material for viewing, listening, reading, or entertainment;

• Teach their children how to evaluate what they see and hear;

• Be aware there are federal, state and local laws prohibiting the sale and distribution of obscene and/or pornographic materials to minors, and to inform the proper authorities when it appears these laws are being violated; and

• Be knowledgeable about the availability of, and have the skills to use, tools to restrict access to media they find inappropriate for their children.

California State PTA believes parents and the mass media each have a responsibility to provide positive experiences which enrich the lives of children and youth. PTA further believes that media literacy, including TV and video viewing skills, should be included in K-12 curriculum and in PTA parent education programs.

Minor Consent for Health Care


California State PTA believes that providing for the physical and mental well-being of the family unit is important to quality of life. California State PTA further believes that everyone is entitled to appropriate, confidential, and timely health care and has the right to make decisions regarding treatment based on medical advice and in accordance with personal beliefs.

California State PTA believes that it is usually in the best interest of children and their families for parents to be involved in the health care decisions of their adolescent children. The California PTA also believes, however, that under certain circumstances, adolescents must be allowed to consent for their own health care in order to protect public health and/or the health and welfare of the minor. California State PTA supports exceptions provided by state statutes that allow minors to consent for their own care.†

† Examples of exceptions include: CA Health & Safety Code §§ 121020, 123110(a); CA Family Code §§ 6922-6929, CA Health & Safety Code §§ 123450

Missing and Exploited Children

Adopted March 1986 – Reviewed and deemed relevant May 2016 – Community Concerns Commission

California State PTA believes PTA, as an advocate for children, has the responsibility to work with schools as well as social and government agencies to support:

• The ongoing operation of a state clearinghouse to serve as a missing children information center that would tie into the National Crime Information Center;

• The maintenance of the California Violent Crime Information Center to assist in the identification and apprehension of persons responsible for the disappearance and exploitation of children, plus an
automated computer system for response to reports of missing children;

• Requiring local law enforcement agencies to make immediate assessment of steps needed to locate minors and, within 24 hours, file report(s) with clearinghouses and other agencies as may be appropriate;

• Establishment of a statewide computer system to provide multi-jurisdictional coordination;

• Programs to assist runaway and homeless youth and their families, including programs to temporarily provide safe shelters while families and/or appropriate agencies are contacted;

• Legislation that would provide stringent punishment for murderers of children and for perpetrators of serious and repeated physical, mental and sexual abuse crimes against children;

• Adequate funding for missing children programs and national missing and exploited children centers/clearinghouses;

• Legislation to require that the school records of missing children who had been attending school are appropriately marked in case another school requests that child’s cumulative folder;

• Establishment of uniform school district policies statewide that would require appropriate school personnel to immediately contact law enforcement when they believe a child to be missing and report any suspected missing child in attendance at school to law enforcement as is required in cases of suspected child abuse;

• Encouraging elementary schools to offer age-appropriate child abduction prevention curriculum to children and to their parents;

• The display of posters or pictures of currently missing children in an area accessible to school personnel only within each school;

• Ensuring the reintegration of long-term missing children who have been located back into the school system; and

• Legislation to secure the safety of the school facility.

Nutrition Education

Adopted May 1974 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Health Commission

California State PTA recognizes that adequate nutrition is a key component necessary for the optimum physical, behavioral, and intellectual development of each individual. Healthy eating habits and an active lifestyle increase resistance to communicable disease and reduce the risk of chronic disease, developmental disabilities, eating disorders, and infant mortality. California State PTA therefore believes all individuals should have access to information regarding adequate nutrition.

Nutrition education is critical to the school curriculum as noted by the increasing problem of obesity in our children. California State PTA believes it is important to promote healthy lifestyles and positive changes in attitude for future generations.

It is important that children be taught the relationship between good nutrition and good personal health so that they learn to choose foods that foster a lifetime of healthful eating habits. It is equally important that parents and children have access to the most up-to-date, scientifically-based nutrition information available.

California State PTA believes that students, staff, parents, and the community can benefit from an understanding of the importance of good nutrition education by encouraging and supporting:

• Teacher training on comprehensive nutrition education;

• Comprehensive nutrition education curriculum that provides students with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to make wise food choices throughout their lives;

• Programs that provide nutrition education for parents and the community;

• The recommended daily nutritional guidelines of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA);

• School districts to make maximum use of state and federal funds available for food service programs so that all children may have access to nutritious meals; and

• Collaborative efforts to support nutrition education.

Parent Involvement: Building Bridges and Eliminating Barriers

Adopted April 2011 – Family Engagement Commission

California State PTA believes that a successful future for all children can be ensured only by families, schools, local and state agencies working in partnership with one another. It is in the best interests of children and their educational success that families, organizations and government entities seek ways to reduce or eliminate barriers to parent involvement.

School practices that promote involvement through outreach, programs/operations, engagement, community building, and support services have a statistically significant and direct influence on student success. PTA can help schools build bridges that eliminate barriers to effective parent and community involvement.

There are also circumstantial barriers to effective involvement. Circumstantial barriers refer to conditions and situations that distress the family, which may temporarily or chronically inhibit or impede their ability to perform their engagement roles and responsibilities in the learning, development, and well-being of their children, thereby reducing benefits children might otherwise receive.

Barriers to involvement in the area of basic functioning may include, but are not limited to:

• Childcare issues

• Illiteracy/language skills
Advocacy

better than ide
efforts are more likely to produce students who perform
and support strong comprehensive parent involvement
involvement policy that states “Schools that undertake
achievement. The State of California has a parent
children’s education results
has shown that greater parental involvement in
throughout a child’s educational experience. Research
first teachers and family engagement is essential
California State PTA
should work together to suppor
School Partnership Implementation Guide provides the
becoming involved. The National Standards for Family
understand the barriers that get in the way of families
be the voice for these families and r
families who felt disenfranchised. PTA must continue to
Since 1897, the PTA has been the voice of those
Concerns include, but are not limited to:
Barriers to involvement in the area of community
concerns include, but are not limited to:
Barriers to involvement in the area of health (e.g., heath
and development issues of the child or any immediate
family member, diagnosed or undiagnosed, chronic or
otherwise) include, but are not limited to:
Illness
Disability/special needs
Lack of proper nutrition
Lack of hygiene
Lack of access to regular preventative healthcare
Developmental issues
Depression
Psychological issues/mental illness

Barriers to involvement in the area of community
concerns include, but are not limited to:
Lack of community safety (i.e., traffic concerns,
predators, gangs, etc., e.g., dangerous to walk to or
from school)
Litigation/lack of access to legal services
Substance abuse/addiction
Violence in the home
Child abuse and neglect (child endangerment)
Incarceration/court ordered restrictions
Children in dependency or family court system

Since 1897, the PTA has been the voice of those
families who felt disenfranchised. PTA must continue to
be the voice for these families and reach out and
understand the barriers that get in the way of families
becoming involved. The National Standards for Family-
School Partnership Implementation Guide provides the
framework of how families, schools and communities
should work together to support student success.
California State PTA believes that parents are a child’s
first teachers and family engagement is essential
throughout a child’s educational experience. Research
has shown that greater parental involvement in
children’s education results in higher levels of student
achievement. The State of California has a parent
involvement policy that states “Schools that undertake
and support strong comprehensive parent involvement
efforts are more likely to produce students who perform
better than identical schools that do not involve parents.”

Parenting Education and Skills Development

Adopted May 1987 – Revised November 2013 – Family
Engagement Commission

Research shows that parenting – the process of rearing
a child – requires skills and an appreciation of child
development from infancy to adulthood. Understanding
how to support the social, emotional, physical and
intellectual growth of children positively impacts their
lives and promotes student success.

When families, schools and communities work together
to develop, support and offer parent education programs
and skills development for parents and caregivers,
children can thrive.
California State PTA believes:

• Parenting is a challenging task for which there is often
  little preparation
• Comprehensive and accessible parenting education
  programs equip parents with more information,
  strategies and tools to support a child’s growth and
development
• Training for adults should be offered through parent
  education programs and other resources in the
  community
• Parenting lessons should be a component of life-skills
  courses in middle and high school

Parenting education should include information, skills
development and training on:

• Physical, intellectual, social and emotional aspects of
  child development and how to support a child’s growth
  from birth through adolescence to adulthood
• How to recognize, diagnose and treat special needs,
  including physical and learning disabilities, and how to
  collaboratively support special needs children
• Life skills including goal setting, decision-making and
  choices, responsibility, assertiveness and cooperation
• Roles and responsibilities for a well-functioning family
• Strategies for effective communication within the
  family as well as with teachers and others involved in
  a child’s development
• Parents’ rights and responsibilities in their role as
  advocates for children in schools and in the
  community
• The California educational system, family-school
  partnerships and the benefits of family engagement to
  support student success

PTA has a responsibility to:

• Develop, support and offer parenting education
  programs and other parenting resources and tools to
  its members and the community at large
• Help educators understand and appreciate the value
  of parenting education
• Encourage schools to provide parenting skills
  education for students

• Time demands/stress (i.e., work schedules, appointments, etc., e.g., single parent families, etc.)
• Crisis (i.e., death, job loss, divorce/separation, accident, homelessness,
• Lack of financial resources (poverty) (e.g., inability to pay for services, supplies, clothing, alarm clock, etc.)
• Lack of transportation/mobility
• Transient in station (i.e., migrant worker, military, etc.)

Barriers to involvement in the area of community
concerns include, but are not limited to:
Lack of community safety (i.e., traffic concerns,
predators, gangs, etc., e.g., dangerous to walk to or
from school)
Litigation/lack of access to legal services
Substance abuse/addiction
Violence in the home
Child abuse and neglect (child endangerment)
Incarceration/court ordered restrictions
Children in dependency or family court system

Since 1897, the PTA has been the voice of those
families who felt disenfranchised. PTA must continue to
be the voice for these families and reach out and
understand the barriers that get in the way of families
becoming involved. The National Standards for Family-
School Partnership Implementation Guide provides the
framework of how families, schools and communities
should work together to support student success.
• Promote family engagement and develop parent leaders to promote student success
• Support teacher training programs in parenting skills education
• Collaborate with other state and local parenting programs to make parenting resources readily available and accessible to the maximum number of families

Schools have a responsibility to:
• Implement research-based best practices in the area of family engagement
• Share information with parents on important topics such as programs, classroom practices, parental rights and responsibilities, mandated state testing, and school rules
• Engage parents as partners in the learning process through regular communication about their students' performance, academic growth, assignments, expectations, and any areas of concern
• Provide workshops and programs that help parents build parenting skills and participate as advocates in the learning process

Physical Education (K-12)

&Adopted May 1993 – Revised February 2014 – Health Commission

California State PTA believes a quality physical education program that operates cooperatively within the school’s comprehensive health program is essential to the well-being of the youth of California.

California State PTA supports actions by state and local governments and local educational agencies that provide for high-quality daily physical education programs for all children in kindergarten through grade 12.

Parents and teachers should educate children and youth to prepare them to participate throughout life in appropriate physical activities.

PTA believes that:
• Good health is basic to education and physical education is basic to good health;
• A certified teacher, trained and educated in physical education, should be the educator at all school sites;
• The goal of physical education should be to promote lifelong fitness habits in all students; and
• All students must be treated equally in an integrated physical education class, as required by state law.

California State PTA believes a good physical education program promotes self-discipline by teaching children to take control of their lives and to be responsible for their own health and fitness.

Prevention and Intervention Programs

&Adopted January 1995 – Revised February 2014 – Health, Community Concerns and Family Engagement Commissions

California State PTA believes in the importance of preventing and eliminating factors that may be detrimental to the health, safety and well-being of all children, families and youth.

Recognizing that any circumstance that interferes with a child’s potential to become a healthy, educated, productive citizen places that child at risk, California State PTA believes prevention and intervention programs are vital. Early intervention programs are needed to end the escalating patterns of alienation, which often lead to anti-social and criminal behavior. Prevention and intervention programs must include the areas of physical health, mental health and be designed to enable children and youth to become productive citizens in their communities.

California State PTA further believes that collaboration must occur between the school, health, social services, and other community agencies to design and provide intervention and prevention/support programs for youth. Such programs may include strategies that will:
• Enhance self-esteem and self-confidence;
• Emphasize disease prevention, immunization, visual screening, auditory testing and dental care;
• Educate youth on proper nutrition, appropriate prenatal care, and the dangers of drug, tobacco and other nicotine-containing products, such as e-cigarettes and other products as yet to be created, and alcohol use;
• Provide counseling, and where appropriate, mentoring;
• Strengthen and expand alternative education programs;
• Provide life skills education including parenting and vocational training; and
• Provide positive age appropriate recreational, social, and cultural activities in the community before and after school hours and on weekends.

California State PTA believes that children and youth must be given every opportunity to reach their full potential. California State PTA further believes that concerned individuals, agencies, and organizations must join together to address the needs of all children and youth. Together, families, schools, and communities can effectively strengthen and enhance the maturation of our children, resulting in emotionally secure, healthy, and socially responsible adults.
Prevention of Teen Pregnancy


California State PTA believes parents/guardians should take primary responsibility for teaching life skills that contribute to adolescent well-being: goal setting, decision-making, responsibility, assertiveness and recognizing the consequences of choices. Today, the health of young people is critically linked to the health-related behaviors they choose to adopt. School health programs can play a crucial role in promoting health behaviors while enhancing academic performance.

California State PTA supports Coordinated School Health Programs that address the needs of young people in a systematic, integrated way. Coordinated School Health Programs include abstinence and pregnancy/disease prevention, education related to information about emotional and physical development, family life education and communication, critical thinking, and decision-making skills.

Studies show that parenthood during adolescence usually results in interrupted education, inadequate job skills, limited employment opportunities, and inadequate parenting skills. Further research has proven that adolescents who receive an appropriate and adequate family life education become sexually active at later ages than those who are deprived of this curriculum.

California State PTA urges its units, councils and districts to work for developmentally appropriate family life education within the context of a comprehensive health education curriculum which shall include but is not limited to:

- Components on sexual abstinence, pregnancy prevention and personal responsibility;
- The risks and consequences associated with sexual activity; and
- The increased health and emotional risks of adolescent pregnancy for mothers, fathers and babies.

Public Involvement in School Governance

Adopted January 2003 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Legislation Commission

California State PTA believes in democratic principles of government and that, as part of the established democratic process, any governance system must include checks and balances between the executive, legislative and judicial systems. Citizens must maintain and exercise the right to vote for those who govern them. The officials they elect should be directly responsible and accountable to their constituents. Every citizen should be encouraged to give input to their elected officials, state agencies, and local governing boards for the improvement of services. California State PTA believes these principles of governance are essential to a well functioning and effective public education system so vital to a thriving democracy.

The California State Constitution, Article IX, sets forth the framework for California’s public education system, including the election of a state superintendent of public instruction. Clear definition of responsibilities for each part of the school governance system is necessary for this structure to function smoothly.

California State PTA believes that the roles and responsibilities of each component in the state’s education governance structure must be clearly defined, compatible, and not overlapping or contradictory.

- The elected Governor is responsible for producing the total State Budget, including education.
- The elected Superintendent must have authority for the fiscal and programmatic implementation of the education program. To assign this authority outside the Office of the Superintendent is to disenfranchise the public from the policy making process.
- The State Board of Education is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the state Senate. California State PTA believes the role of the Board of Education should be to advise the Superintendent of Public Instruction and to serve as a conduit for public input to education matters at the state level. PTA also believes the members of the State Board of Education must reflect the demographics of the State and include representation of stakeholders, including parents.
- California State PTA believes that input from members of the public is essential in education policy making at all levels of governance—state, county, and local school district.
- California State PTA believes in local control of educational decisions when it is in the best interests of students to make these decisions locally. Local school districts should have the flexibility to meet the needs of their student populations. Local governing boards should focus on policies and planning and should allow superintendents full authority to manage the schools in their districts.
- California State PTA further believes that County Offices of Education, as established in the California State Constitution, have an important role in providing services and oversight for local school districts, and in some instances direct control of local schools. The roles and responsibilities of members of County Boards of Education, whether elected or appointed, must also be clearly defined as programmatic and fiscal implementation, or advisory.

Appointed members of the State Board of Education must be qualified by either experience or training for their roles and be required to participate in ongoing professional development.

California State PTA strongly believes it is the responsibility of parents and community members to provide necessary input for effective decision-making at the local and state levels. The public is responsible for electing local school board members, for monitoring actions of the State Board of Education, and for holding both elected and appointed officials accountable for the decisions they make while fulfilling their established roles and responsibilities.
Public School Employer-Employee Negotiations

Adopted March 1974 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Education Commission

California State PTA recognizes that public school employer-employee collective bargaining is mandated by law and that negotiations greatly influence education. As mandated by law, the bargaining parties are required to make public their positions. These details must be provided to the public at the beginning of the process. PTA has the responsibility to become knowledgeable and to inform the public about the proposed contract and any proposed changes through the negotiations. As PTA is an organization whose membership is composed of parents, teachers, students, school district employees, school board members and concerned community members, PTA must remain neutral in a dispute arising from school employer-employee negotiations.

California State PTA believes:

• All school employees are entitled to the benefits of fair employment practices including due process, optimum working conditions and adequate salaries and benefits;

• Locally-elected school boards, as representatives of the people, have legal responsibility for decision-making;

• Local school boards and school employee organizations should be accountable to the public for the terms of the contract and the fiscal impact on the instructional program; and

• Full disclosure of the final contract should be made available to the public and fiscal impact of the contract should be discussed at a public hearing before the final vote of the school board.

California State PTA supports:

• The adoption of policies by local school boards that provide full opportunity for the public to express its views on the issues to be negotiated; and

• The right of school employees, through their organizations, to meet and negotiate in good faith with public school employers to reach written agreement on those matters within the scope of bargaining† according to state law. (Included in scope is the requirement that the local district peer assistance review process will be negotiated in the contract according to AB 2X, Statutes of 1999.)

The PTA has a responsibility to:

• Study and become informed early in the process about the proposed contracts and the fiscal implications and to analyze the effect on the students and the programs in the district;

• Inform all parties if any issue being negotiated either is consistent with or differs with adopted California State PTA position statements;

• Encourage all parties to work cooperatively to develop procedures to ensure that classrooms and students are not used for propaganda purposes;

• Remain neutral in the event of a dispute††;

• Continue with normal PTA activities in the event of a dispute; and

• Inform parents and community members about proposed contracts and encourage other school-based and community organizations to study proposed contracts.

(The above statement is a policy of the PTA as an organization, and is in no way intended as an infringement on the activities of its members acting as individuals.)

† Scope of bargaining - The law defines “scope,” as a broad range of issues and subjects that either party may or may not introduce for negotiation. Scope is a crucial, dynamic, and frequently litigated area.

†† Dispute - a verbal controversy, a controversy, a debate, or quarrel on any issue under discussion.

Collective Bargaining

The following “walks” PTA leadership through the collective bargaining process and further provides a step-by-step guide for appropriate PTA activities.

A Checklist for Parents on the Role of Collective Bargaining in Public Education

What role can your PTA/PTSA assume when your local school board and teachers begin to negotiate a contract?

The most important thing your unit, council or district PTA can do is advocate for all children. The members can do this by:

• Studying the contract proposals and analyzing the effect on the students in the district.

• Asking the local school board and the local bargaining units: “What effect will this proposed contract have on all children?”

• Working with all education stakeholders to secure adequate school funding.

The PTA does not advocate the inclusion or exclusion of certain items in the proposed contract. However, PTA members should be knowledgeable and aware of the effects of the proposed contract provisions on students.

Some questions PTA members should ask include

• Are the implications of the provisions upon the budget/financial resources of the school district understood by all negotiators and the community?

• If a contract dispute should arise, would an arbitrator’s interpretation of a provision have an adverse effect on the best interests of students?

• How will this proposed contract affect other school district employees?

• If the language of a provision is unclear, what is its history? Ask questions from both sides.

PTA unit/council/district PTAs should be aware of the progress of the negotiations, should publicize proposed changes as they are announced, and should give input appropriately to ensure all contract provisions place the interests of the students first.
A check list of items all parents should keep in mind when studying the contract proposals:

**Guidelines for Class Size**

Does the contract allow
- adequate student/teacher ratio for individual instruction?
- adjustments to meet unanticipated needs?
- flexibility for needed curriculum adjustments or needed education innovations?

**Maintenance of Standards**

Does the contract allow
- new programs and changes in scheduling and curriculum offerings to occur during the contract period?

**Workday and Workload**

Does the contract make provisions for
- assistance to students before and after classroom hours?
- staff development and orientation opportunities?
- staff attendance at evening meetings and student activities?
- lesson preparation time for appropriate personnel?
- flexibility to allow for creative and innovative strategies in the classroom?
- a definition of professional duties?

**Conference Time**

Does the contract permit and encourage
- reasonable periods of time for teachers and administrators to confer with parents and students at hours convenient for working parents?
- reasonable periods of time for meetings among school staff to promote collegiality and better understanding of students’ needs?

**Extracurricular Activities**

Does the contract provide
- stipends or incentives for supervision of students participating in extracurricular activities such as sport, drama, music, school newspapers, etc.?

**Release Time for Teachers**

Does the contract provide
- unpaid leave for teachers who wish to improve their teaching skills?
- adequate classroom supervision by certificated personnel when the regularly scheduled teacher is absent from the classroom?

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**Guidelines for PTAs Regarding Public School Employer-Employee Negotiations**

California State PTA strongly urges all unit, council and district PTAs to closely monitor their respective school boards’ compliance with the Public Notice section of the Employer-Employee Relations Act. Unless a PTA does so, it will jeopardize its ability to make meaningful, timely comments about the initial and subsequent proposals under negotiation.

**Contract Study Committee**

PTA has a responsibility to become knowledgeable and to inform the public about proposed contracts. To fulfill this responsibility, the following steps should be taken:

1. Form a PTA study committee including representation from all PTA units within the school district. School district employees should not serve on this study committee because they have the opportunity to express their views through their respective bargaining units.

   Please Note: Where a council or district PTA relates directly to a school district, the said council or district PTA should appoint the study committee. Where a group of units or councils relates to a school district, the units or councils should appoint members to serve on a study committee.

2. The PTA criterion for any study, including collective bargaining issues, must be, “WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT ON ALL CHILDREN?”

3. Encourage other school-based and community organizations to make their own studies of the proposed contract(s).

4. Study the current contract, the school district budget, initial contract proposals and subsequent proposals from the school board and employees’ organization.

   a. Adequate lead time is essential for any group beginning to study collective bargaining proposals since several key documents should be reviewed first. The committee must react to contract issues from a position of knowledge about the current fiscal condition of the school district, and how the current agreement affects the education of students.

   b. Documents to be studied:

   (1) THE BUDGET — A thorough briefing on the current year’s budget is essential to understand a school district’s financial condition and how funds are being allocated. This information should be presented by school district financial staff members in a clearly understandable format. (See Resource List, EdSource.)

   (2) THE CURRENT CONTRACT — Almost all school districts have an existing contract with each employee bargaining unit. While it may seem to be a complex task, it is important that time be allowed for the committee to become familiar with and knowledgeable about the current contract language. Particular attention should be paid to the interests of parents and students in the current contract.
(3) INITIAL CONTRACT PROPOSALS — When each bargaining unit’s new contract is to be negotiated, the initial proposals should be obtained from the employee group and the school district. Representatives from management and the employee groups should be invited to give their interpretations of the proposals. The language should be clear in its intent and the committee should ask, “WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT ON ALL CHILDREN?”

The school board must allow time for the community to study and then comment on the board’s initial proposals before adopting them as the board’s negotiating position. The PTA should find out what the school board’s time frame is for this process.

(4) SUBSEQUENT PROPOSALS — The study committee should continue to monitor the negotiating process for the introduction of new subjects arising after the presentation of initial proposals. These subsequent proposals must be made public within 24 hours after their introduction.

5. If any questions or concerns arise from the study of the initial or subsequent proposals, those questions or concerns should be communicated to the group that originated those proposals.

6. Report results of the study with any recommended action(s) to the PTA membership. Recommendations might include comments to be made to the school board and/or comments to be made to the bargaining unit. Such comments must be made within the framework of California State PTA policies and positions.

7. Follow the reporting and communicating procedures through the negotiations process.

8. Study information published by your local media.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement

Current law requires the following:

Before a public school employer enters into a written agreement with an exclusive representative covering matters within the scope of representation, the major provisions of the agreement, including, but not limited to, the costs that would be incurred by the public school employer under the agreement for the current and subsequent fiscal years, shall be disclosed at a public meeting of the public school employer in a format established for this purpose by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

California Government Code Section 3547.5

One of the recommendations from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to school boards for implementation of this law is that the board:

Make available to the public a copy of the proposed agreement prior to the day of the public meeting; the number of days the agreement should be made available to the public is determined locally.

California State PTA strongly recommends that unit, council and district PTAs request their respective school boards to follow these recommendations and provide copies of the proposed agreement to the public in a timely manner.
boards to adopt a policy that includes a minimum of ten days as the "number of days the agreement should be made available to the public,..." The policy also should require the board to set time aside for public comment before entering into the written agreement.

California State PTA urges unit, council and district PTAs to study the proposed agreement and make appropriate comments. Such comments must be made within the framework of California State PTA policies and positions.

Sample Letter to the School Board, Superintendent and Bargaining Unit President

ORGANIZATION TITLE AND ADDRESS
(May be home address of PTA president)

Date

TO: _______, President,
    Board of Trustees
    _______ School District
    _______ President, _______ Association

FROM: _______ PTA (Council or District PTA) President

SUBJECT: Negotiation

The _______ PTA has carefully reviewed the California State PTA's Toolkit information on negotiations. _______ PTA will follow these guidelines. Accordingly, we shall remain neutral during negotiations. We recognize that at times negotiations can be very difficult and time consuming for the school district and the employee association. We know you can appreciate the awkward situation labor negotiations can create for PTA president and PTA executive board members. To ensure compliance with the California State PTA policy of neutrality, PTA members will not attend separate meetings with either school district or employee association representatives. It would be inappropriate for PTA to invite the school district superintendent or representative, a representative of the district employee association to discuss negotiations at a PTA board meeting, but both sides must be represented at that time. PTA will not distribute information provided by either side, but may choose to distribute information PTA has prepared. The _______ PTA will continue its regularly scheduled meeting on the school or district sites, and its regular schedule of volunteer programs.

If you have any questions, I'd be happy to discuss our position of neutrality or any of the above-mentioned matters with you.

Sincerely,

PTA President (Council or District PTA)

Public Involvement in Collective Bargaining Process

When local school boards and employee groups meet at the negotiating table, the decisions made are of great importance to the quality of education provided for students. Parents and concerned community members have realized that negotiations by school employee groups such as those representing teachers, school office personnel, aides, custodians and cafeteria personnel greatly influence events in the classroom and have an impact on the overall cost of education.

It is essential that public input into this process be based on knowledge of the operations of the local school district. It is only in this way the public can become a valid part of the process and present viewpoints pertinent to the current contract or proposals, while consistently advocating positions that support a high standard of education for students in the classroom.

California State PTA has prepared this paper to assist its membership to better understand the dynamic role collective bargaining plays in education.

I. What Is Collective Bargaining?*

Collective bargaining is a labor relations process developed in the private sector which recognizes the historical conflict between management interests such as profits and the interests of workers such as salaries and working conditions. In the collective bargaining process, the representatives of labor and management present each other with demands—proposals—and proceed to compromise their divergent viewpoints—negotiate—until a written settlement—contract—is reached. Traditionally, private sector negotiations are conducted in private meetings of the two parties and often lead to an adversarial relationship.

II. Why Is There Collective Bargaining In Public Education?

The momentum for collective bargaining in public education increased during the late 1960s as teachers and other school employees felt they could not achieve desired economic benefits and acceptable working conditions as long as school boards, represented by superintendents, retained unilateral decision-making authority on these issues. More than 40 states now have collective bargaining laws.

III. What Is The Education Employment Relations Act?

The EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS ACT (EERA) provides that negotiations "shall" occur between school boards and their employee groups and negotiations "shall" be limited in scope to matters relating to wages, hours of employment, and other terms and conditions of employment. The process for establishing collective bargaining was initially spelled out in Senate Bill 160, the Educational Employment Relations Act of 1976 authored by Senator Al Rodda.

*Refer to Contents of a Typical Teachers Contract and GLOSSARY on collective bargaining terminology, Advocacy Chapter.

There are also subjects upon which the employer is only required to consult with the employee organization, e.g., definition of educational objectives, determination of course content and curriculum, and selection of textbooks. The school board may expand these topics as it wishes although none of the items for consultation has to be included in the contract.
In reality, however, the exact definition of scope is unclear and is one of the most controversial areas in negotiations. A regulatory body established by EERA—the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB)—is constantly called upon to settle disputes dealing with scope as well as carry out the many other duties with which the PERB has been charged.

IV. How Does Collective Bargaining Affect Education?

The negotiated contract becomes the instrument for school district governance on each provision that has been negotiated into the signed contract. Therefore, the contract has potential implications for everything which occurs in the classrooms of that school district since issues dealing with class size, hours of employment, teacher transfer policies, procedures for employee evaluation as well as wages and fringe benefits all have an impact on the quality of education.

V. Why Should The Public Be Involved?

The community has a high stake in its public education system and, therefore, should be equally concerned about the negotiations which result in the final contract. While negotiations are usually conducted in private meetings between representatives of the school district and the employee group, the public must study the issues, evaluate their impact on the educational system, and know how the collective bargaining process works and how the public can fit into the process.

If a representative system of government such as ours—one in which school boards are elected to represent the public viewpoint—is to work, people must have the ability to:

1. Elect their representatives;
2. Influence those they elect;
3. Hold those officials accountable.

VI. How is the Public Provided For in EERA?

When EERA was passed, it included a very important section which provides for public access to the collective bargaining process. Called the "sunshine" clause, it mandates that all initial proposals of any contract negotiations between the employee group and the school district shall be presented at a public meeting of the board of education and that a "reasonable" time shall elapse to allow for public input before negotiations start. Since PERB has mandated all boards of education adopt a public notice policy, PTA members should become knowledgeable about their school district public notice policy and ensure that it specifies:

1. How the district will make the public aware of the issues;
2. When the public can speak to each set of proposals;
3. How the public may speak to the issues.

VII. How Does the Public Speak to the Issues?

According to EERA, any person or representative group may comment on the issues to be negotiated or on the contract itself at any meeting of the board of education. The PTA does not advocate the inclusion or exclusion of certain clauses in the contract. PTA members should ask, however, that each clause be analyzed to determine "WHAT EFFECT THIS WILL HAVE ON ALL CHILDREN."

When feasible, PTA involvement in the collective bargaining process should be through a Public Notice Sunshine Committee. This approach will allow the PTA organization to maintain its neutral position regarding any dispute(s) that may arise, and will preclude offending any one segment of PTA membership.

Contents of a Typical Teachers Contract (EdSource, March 1999)

**Compensation:** cost-of-living adjustment, salary schedule, pay for specific duties (department chair, coach), minimum teacher salaries; expenses, travel reimbursement, tuition reimbursement; mentor teacher selection process

**Benefits:** health and welfare premiums, specific plans offered, retiree benefits

**Hours:** length of work day, school year, calendar (holidays, vacations), minimum days, preparation periods, lunch

**Leaves:** bereavement, pregnancy, child rearing, religious, sick leave, disability, sabbatical, personal need/necessity, jury duty, military, industrial accident/illness, catastrophic illness

**Retirement:** early retirement, benefits

**Nondiscrimination Job Assignment:** assignment, promotion, transfer, reassignment

**Class size and case loads:** pupils per teacher, students per counselor, number of teaching periods, instructional aides

**Safety Conditions**

- **Evaluation:** procedures and remediation
- **Grievance:** procedures, appeal process, mediation, arbitration
- **Discipline:** procedures and criteria

** Layoff and Reemployment**

- **Organizational Security:** payroll deduction of union dues ("agency fee"), maintenance of membership, fair share fees, union rights
- **Work Stoppage:** "no-strikes" clause
- **Contract:** duration, reopeners
- **Savings Clause:** contract in effect if portion invalidated by court, Legislature

**Management Rights**

- **Consultation:** topics, procedures
Glossary

* AGENCY SHOP – A requirement, usually contained in a negotiated agreement, that all employees in a bargaining entity pay a fee, (often called a “fair share” or “service” fee) covering the cost of representation to the employee organization which is the exclusive representative of the entity.

* AGREEMENT – A written negotiated contract between the employer and the recognized exclusive representative of employees in a bargaining entity that sets out conditions of employment (wages, hours, fringe benefits, etc.) for a stated period of time. Often contains a procedure for settling grievances over interpretation or application of the agreement and may include terms governing the parties’ relationship. Under EERA, an agreement, which may be for a period of no more than three years, becomes binding when accepted by both parties. PERB has no authority to enforce agreements.

* ARBITRATION – A method of resolving disputes between an employer and employee organization by submitting the dispute to a neutral third party (or tripartite panel) whose decision may be binding or merely advisory.

* CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEE – A school employee who is qualified by a certificate or credential to perform a particular educational service, such as classroom teacher, counselor and psychologist, as defined in Education Code.

*** CFIER – The California Foundation for Improvement of Employer-Employee Relations. The organization is committed to “building and maintaining effective labor-management relationships of partnerships.” Its activities include training programs in negotiations and problem-solving, neutral facilitation services, skill-building workshops and conferences, consultation, research and development, and long-term support service.

* CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE – A school employee in a position not requiring a certificate or credential, such as school aides or clerical, custodial or food service employees.


* FACT-FINDING – The method of impasse resolution, usually advisory, that involves investigation of a bargaining dispute by a neutral third party, or tripartite panel that reports the results to the parties, usually with recommendations for settling the dispute. Under EERA, the parties may request that their dispute be submitted to fact-finding (under specified procedures) if a mediator is unable to settle the controversy within 15 days and the mediator declares that fact-finding is appropriate.

* GOOD FAITH BARGAINING – Broadly defined as the duty of the parties to meet and negotiate at reasonable times with willingness to reach agreement on matters within the scope of representation; however, neither party is required to make a concession or agree to any proposal.

** GRIEVANCE – A means of settling disputes which arise from the interpretation or application of the existing contract. When disagreements cannot be settled at one of the lower levels of the grievance procedure the exclusive bargaining agent may take the disagreement to arbitration. Arbitration can be binding or advisory depending on the wording of the contract.

** IMPASSE – A deadlock or stalemate in bargaining declared by one or both parties. Declaration of impasse usually begins the implementation of impasse procedures (mediation or fact finding), and once these procedures have been exhausted can allow for unilateral action by the employer.

** INITIAL PROPOSAL – A written offer for consideration made by the exclusive representative or the school district as part of the bargaining process for the next agreement. The EEAA lists those items which are within the scope of representation and are the subject of mandatory bargaining.

*** INTEREST-BASED BARGAINING – A more cooperative method for reaching agreement about the critical aspects of employer-employee relationships. Negotiations are based on mutual interests rather than on individual positions.

* MEDIATION – Also called conciliation. Efforts of a neutral third party to help resolve a dispute (usually involving contract negotiations) between an employer and employee organization. The mediator normally has no power to impose a settlement. Under EERA, mediation is the first step in the impasse resolution procedure.

* NEGOTIATIONS – The process of the employer and the exclusive representative meeting together and bargaining in a good faith effort to reach agreement on matters within the scope of representation and executing, if requested by either party, an agreement incorporating matters agreed on.

* PERB – The Public Employment Relations Board is charged with administering and enforcing EERA. Among its many functions are investigating and deciding “unfair practice” charges or other claims that the act has been violated, establishing or approving bargaining entities, conducting representation elections, and seeking court enforcement of its orders and decisions as it deems necessary.

** PUBLIC NOTICE – The public notice section of EERA is intended to give the public an opportunity to present its views. Initial bargaining proposals of both the exclusive representative and the district must be presented at a public meeting of the school board and are public records. Negotiations will be delayed a reasonable time for the public to comment.

Unless the parties agree otherwise, laws requiring open meetings do not apply to meetings and discussions between parties; with mediators, arbitrators, or fact-finding panels; and executive sessions of the school board on negotiations.

If both parties agree, any phrase of negotiations may be conducted publicly, or observers may be invited. Typically, the school board and union announce their opening positions and then talk privately. Although any meeting of three or more school board members must
be open to the public, EERA specifically permits private meetings between the school board and its negotiator.

* SCOPE OF BARGAINING – The law defines “scope,” as a broad range of issues and subjects that either party may or may not introduce for negotiation. Scope is a crucial, dynamic, and frequently litigated area.

* SICKOUT – A job action involving a number of employees failing to report to work on the same day and claiming to be sick.

** SLOWDOWN – A job action involving a number of employees working at less than normal efficiency.

* STRIKE – A work stoppage. Employees acting together in refusing to work in order to gain a bargaining concession or to persuade the employer to take certain action. Usually occurs when negotiations on a new agreement reach impasse and lasts until settlement on a new agreement is reached, but may be called for a shorter period as a pressure tactic or to protest employer actions. Usually conducted under leadership of the employee organization, following a vote among members. A "wildcat" strike is a walkout by employees without authorization of the organization. A "rolling" or "yo-yo" strike involves several intermittent walkouts of short duration interspersed among days when employees report to work.

* SUNSHINE LAW – A requirement that bargaining proposals or other aspects of public employee bargaining be made public. Under EERA, initial proposals as well as new topics that arise during negotiations must be made available to the public.

* Pocket Guide to the Educational Employment Relations Act, California Public Employee Relations, September 1997

** California Teachers Association Collective Bargaining Handbook

*** Collective Bargaining, 1999, EdSource, 520 San Antonio Road, Suite 200, Mountain View, CA 94040-1217; 650.917.9481; www.edsource.org

** PTA Activities in Relation to Employer-Employee Disputes

Public school employer-employee negotiations and/or disputes and disputes between bargaining units are very much a part of the reality of operating public schools. THE PTA MUST REMAIN NEUTRAL* and MUST refrain from taking sides in all disputes. It is a PTA responsibility to provide opportunities for public understanding of disputed issues through sponsoring public meetings where all sides may present their views.

PTA speaks as an advocate for children and youth. It is a PTA responsibility to urge school board members, school district employees and negotiators on all sides to make the welfare of the students the first and ultimate consideration in all negotiations. PTAs must do this within the framework of California State PTA policies.

(These two paragraphs must be used together at all times, neither may be used without the other.)

"Not taking part with or assisting either of two or more contending parties." Webster’s New International Dictionary, Second Edition, Unabridged.

1. PTA Leaders’ Responsibilities When a Dispute Arises:

   a. The PTA council/district PTA leadership must consult with the California State PTA leadership (through the California State PTA office, 916.440.1985).

   b. The council/district PTA leadership must meet with the leadership of all affected unit PTAs to instruct them in observance of PTA’s neutrality policy.

   c. The council/district PTA leadership must meet with the school district administration and bargaining unit(s) leadership to explain PTA neutrality.

   d. The unit PTA leadership must meet with the school site administration and school site bargaining leadership to explain PTA neutrality.

   e. The unit PTA leadership must communicate PTA’s position of neutrality to the membership.

2. PTAs MUST Remain Neutral:

   a. PTAs must not recruit substitute teachers or staff the classrooms. Classroom instruction is the responsibility of the school district. (See item 4.b.)

   b. PTAs must not recruit substitute classified employees or staff those positions.

   c. PTAs may be on school grounds in general activity areas if there are concerns about the safety of the students.

   d. PTAs must not distribute literature from either side, but may choose to distribute information PTA has prepared.

   e. PTAs must not show partiality toward the administration, the non-striking or striking personnel in any way (e.g., verbally, by serving refreshments, by walking the picket line, etc.).

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3. Remaining Neutral Includes Continuing Normal PTA Activities:
   a. Regular PTA volunteer programs, e.g., volunteers in the media center, library playground, office, lunchroom, classrooms, etc. A list of those who volunteer regularly must be given to the school site administrator and school site bargaining unit(s) leadership.
   b. When PTAs regularly meet in the school facility, such meetings may continue. However, the PTA should make certain that its school facility use permit has not been temporarily suspended by the school district.
   c. Scheduled PTA-sponsored programs and projects may continue.
   d. If a PTA is licensed by the State of California as a child care provider, this activity may be continued. Contracts with parents obligate the PTA to continue providing the child care program. A licensed child care program usually includes a contract with the school district for use of the facility. If this is the case, the district is obligated to ensure safe use of the facility.

4. PTA Leaders’ Obligations:
   a. There is no intent by the PTA to infringe on the rights of its members to act as individuals. However, if an individual is perceived as a PTA leader, he/she is obligated to consider the effect of his/her actions on the PTA organization.
   b. If a PTA leader believes that conscience requires a statement or action favoring one side or the other, a public disclaimer* must be written and sent to the school site administration, school district superintendent, president of the school board, school district employee organization and PTA organization leadership of council and district PTA.
   c. If a PTA leader is a school district employee and plans to work during a dispute, a public disclaimer* must be signed.

* A public disclaimer should include the following information:

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Although I serve as _____(position)____ at the ________PTA, any statement I may make or action I may take regarding the current employer-employee dispute is an individual statement or action and has no connection whatsoever with strict neutrality.
__________________________ PTA, whose position is one of

Signature Date
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d. If a PTA president is also a school district employee with membership in the organization negotiating with the school district, and a dispute arises, the president must delegate the responsibilities of the presidency to the first vice president during these negotiations.

5. In the Event of an Unexpected Walkout* the PTA:
   a. May provide volunteers, if necessary, on the day of an unexpected walkout to care for students in general activity areas on the school grounds until their parents make arrangements to get them home. This activity must not include classroom instruction.
   b. Must not staff classrooms. Staffing of classrooms by noncredentialed personnel is not only inconsistent with PTA efforts to have a qualified teacher in every classroom, it is illegal and the school district can forfeit its ADA (average daily attendance) funding from the state. (Authority: California State Education Code.)

*Job action without prior notification to the employer and with/without the approval of the employee organization (e.g., wildcat strike).

It Should Be Noted

- The school administration is legally responsible for staffing the school. The PTA, as an organization, cannot and must not assume this responsibility.

6. Dealing With the Media:
   a. PTA leaders should expect to be contacted by the media. Any personal opinion is an inappropriate subject for discussion by a PTA spokesperson.
   b. Consult California State PTA (through the California State PTA office) if advice is needed about how to effectively communicate PTA’s position of neutrality.
   c. If caught unprepared, do not attempt to speak “off the cuff” to the caller. State that this is not a convenient time to talk and you will return the call.
   d. PTA leaders must not attack other organizations or representatives of other organizations (i.e., employee groups or school board members).

After a Strike

PTA has an opportunity and an obligation to help restore the school environment to one that provides a positive educational experience for all students.

PTA members must consider what is in the “best interests of all students” and be a vital part of the healing process between employees, employers and parents.

Any planned PTA activity for school district employees MUST have the cooperation and support of the school staff and the approval of the principal and the district superintendent.

For advice on handling individual situations, contact the California State PTA vice president for education and/or vice president for leadership services through the California State PTA office.
Reduced Class Size in Grades K-3


California State PTA recognizes the importance of successful academic and personal development of children in the primary grades. California State PTA believes there must be no more than twenty children and a qualified certificated teacher in each kindergarten through 3rd grade classroom throughout all California public schools but that school districts need flexibility in staffing for this reduced class size. This flexibility should allow a school district to increase class size up to two per class as long as the class size average within a school remains 20 or less.

California State PTA further believes that to optimize the benefits of a twenty student maximum per certificated teacher there must be:

- A separate physical area to accommodate each group of twenty children and the assigned certificated teacher;
- Flexibility in class structure that may include combination classes (K-1, 1-2, etc.) yet always considering the academic and developmental needs of each student when making placements;
- Assignment of teachers who are well trained in teaching techniques required to teach the early childhood/primary grade levels and professional development on best practices for small group instruction;
- A firm funding commitment to make reduced class size an ongoing priority.

California State PTA recognizes the financial obligation that reducing class size places on taxpayers of the state of California. California State PTA strongly believes the people of California understand the importance of investing in children and public education, and therefore will be willing to undertake this obligation. California State PTA further believes that K-3 class size reduction programs should be fully funded by the state.

Regulation of Medical Marijuana Providers Near Schools

Adopted October 2010 – Reviewed and deemed relevant November 2014 – Community Concerns Commission

“California State PTA believes in the importance of preventing and eliminating factors that may be detrimental to the health, safety and well-being of all children and youth.” (Prevention and Intervention Programs Adopted January 1995 – Revised October 2010 – Health, Community Concerns and Family Engagement Commissions)

Moreover, “California State PTA believes that children and youth must be given every opportunity to reach their full potential. California State PTA further believes that concerned individuals, agencies, and organizations must join together to address the needs of all children and youth. Together, families, schools, and communities can effectively strengthen and enhance the maturation of our children, resulting in emotionally secure, healthy, and socially responsible adults.” (Prevention and Intervention Programs Adopted January 1995 – Revised March 2010 Health, Community Concerns and Family Engagement Commissions)

In addition, California State PTA recognizes existing law - the Compassionate Use Act of 1996 (Health & Safety Code 11362.5), which includes the following purposes:

To ensure that seriously ill Californians have the right to obtain and use marijuana for medical purposes where such use is deemed appropriate and has been recommended by a physician who has determined that the person's health would benefit from the use of marijuana in the treatment of cancer, anorexia, AIDS, chronic pain, spasticity, glaucoma, arthritis, migraine, or any other illness for which marijuana provides relief.

With the passage of the Compassionate Use Act of 1996, medical marijuana dispensaries have flourished throughout California. While these dispensaries are intended to serve the seriously ill, there is a growing concern that minors may also be able to purchase marijuana from the dispensaries. In addition, advertising fliers are often distributed in the general area of the dispensaries, encouraging the use of marijuana. Locating medical marijuana dispensaries “next to a school not only advertises substance abuse, but also glamorizes it.” (Regulation of Liquor Licenses Near Schools Resolution, adopted by Convention Delegates May 1997; Reviewed April 2008)

To protect our children and youth from possible easy access to marijuana in a public school zone, California State PTA supports state legislation that would prohibit operation or establishment of a medical marijuana cooperative, collective, dispensary or provider within 600 feet of a school. We encourage local authorities to adopt ordinances which would place these “clinics” further than the aforementioned 600 feet of a school.

Responsibility of Society to the Family

Adopted March 1978 – Revised November 2013 – Family Engagement Commission

California State PTA believes that the family:

- Is the basic unit of society;
- Primarily responsible for rearing children and providing for their well-being;
- Should have access to family support services and programs that respect and reinforce the autonomy of the family

California State PTA recognizes:

- Diversity in family size, structure and beliefs
- Socio-economic factors may hinder parents/families from fulfilling the needs of their children
- It may be necessary for governmental agencies, private agencies and nonprofit organizations to provide parent education and support services to help
California State PTA believes that the four essential components that comprise a safe and peaceful school environment are: the strengths and experiences that students, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel bring to the school campus; the physical setting and conditions in which education takes place; the organizational and interpersonal processes that occur in and around school; and the general atmosphere or spirit of the school. These four components play a major role in the creation of a safe school environment.

California State PTA believes that there are certain qualities inherent to safe and peaceful schools and these places are places where:

- Students feel respected and know that the learning community cares about their individual needs and expects them to succeed;
- Parents and community members are welcomed and encouraged to share ideas, talents and resources for improving the school;
- High standards exist and are communicated on a regular basis;
- Students and staff know that learning and achievement are encouraged and highly valued and that positive social behaviors are expected;
- There is continued involvement and cooperation of parents, students, teachers, security staff, classified staff and law enforcement representatives in designing and revising of the school’s discipline, disaster, safe school and crisis plans;
- Prevention is stressed, and the staff and students are prepared for emergencies and other unforeseen situations;
- Programs are in place to prevent negative behaviors such as gang activity, drug, tobacco and alcohol abuse, bullying and other socially abusive behavior;
- Regular security checks occur;
- There are ongoing training opportunities that allow students and staff to increase their ability to deal with conflict, anger and other threats to safety.

PTA believes that school personnel, students, parents, and community members must work together to develop and implement a safe and peaceful school environment on all school campuses throughout California.

### Safe School Environments

*Adopted March 1991 – Reviewed and deemed relevant May 2016 – Community Concerns Commission*

California State PTA believes that every child is entitled to a safe and peaceful school environment that is orderly and empowering. It is a place in which students and staff are free to learn and teach without the threat of physical and psychological harm. It provides surroundings that are nonviolent, with clear behavioral expectations, and disciplinary policies that are consistently and fairly administered and which confer recognition for positive behavior. It has established policies for proactive security procedures, emergency response plans and the timely maintenance, cleanliness and attractive appearance of the campus and classrooms. Additionally, a safe and peaceful school environment has a crisis response plan in place to deal with unforeseen emergencies.

### School Attendance

*Adopted March 2010 – Reviewed and deemed relevant November 2014 – Community Concerns Commission*

California State PTA recognizes that there are many factors that affect student achievement, including school attendance and absences. Research has shown that chronic absenteeism, encompassing both excused and unexcused absences, correlates highly with lower student achievement and dropout.

California’s long-term student data system does not include attendance data. Although schools track student attendance to receive average daily attendance funding from the state, there is not data at the state level to allow analysis of individual student school attendance.
California monitors unexcused absences (truancy) and addresses these problems through the School Attendance Review Board process at the local level. California State PTA represents parents on the State School Attendance Review Board, which is the body that adopts model standards for school attendance review boards, recognizes local boards that operate model programs, and makes recommendations to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction on issues affecting school attendance and truancy.

Current laws already mandate the following provisions:

- School attendance compulsory at age 6;
- Schools are required to take roll every day and every period for older students; and
- California school districts monitor truancy and takes action via school attendance review boards and school attendance review teams (SARB and SART)

California State PTA will support legislative and executive efforts that would do the following to address chronic absence and improve school attendance:

A) Establish reducing chronic absence a policy priority that is broadly communicated.

B) Support the development of early warning systems that help school districts to identify and intervene, at the earliest age possible, when young children are at risk of academic failure, based upon data on chronic absence, academic achievement and classroom behavior.

C) Ensure absenteeism/attendance (total number of days absent and total days enrolled over the course of the academic year) is added as a field to state and local longitudinal student databases.

D) For districts that enter attendance by individual student, create incentives for districts to provide the data by offering resources (technical assistance and modest grants) to help districts:

1) Analyze their own attendance data to identify schools and populations where chronic absence is a problem.
2) Assist underperforming schools to longitudinally examine levels of chronic absence for the school, as whole, for each grade, subgroup and student, and develop strategies for how they can address the issue in their school improvement plans.
3) Identify common district wide barriers to school attendance and develop strategies for addressing chronic absence in the schools with the highest levels of chronic absence through school policies, student support services, school-community partnerships or other interventions as needed.

E) Provide professional development to teachers, school administrators, and school boards to familiarize them with early warning signs of drop-out including chronic absence, grades, behavior, as well as best practices for intervening at the individual, classroom, school and community level.

F) Build on SARB process to identify chronically absent, not just truant students, and to examine district-wide chronic absence trends, challenges, and potential solutions.

G) Encourage all schools to establish attendance teams charged with reviewing data regularly and taking action and identify community resources to support attendance, as needed.

**School Based Decision Making**

*Adopted March 2003 – Reviewed and deemed relevant February 2014 – Education Commission*

California State PTA supports the concept of school based management in the decision-making process. While the legal responsibility for school governance rests with local Boards of Education, PTA believes that the decentralization of decision making to school sites where service delivery occurs results in greater responsiveness to student and societal needs and improves the quality of educational opportunity.

PTA believes school based management decision making should give constituents – parents, teachers, administrators, students and other community members – meaningful control over what happens in schools in order to enhance school performance and the quality of education provided to all students.

PTA believes that there is a vast potential to close the achievement gap by improving learning, instruction, school governance, operations, and outcomes when representative stakeholder groups receive meaningful training, and resources that enables them to participate in educational decision making.

Schools implementing effective school based management should:

- Have an active vision focused on teaching and learning that is coordinated with district and state standards for student performance.
- Develop knowledge and skills in an ongoing process oriented toward building school-wide capacity for improvement, creating a professional learning community and developing a shared knowledge base.
- Understand that with decision making comes accountability for the results of those decisions.
- Enlist and empower meaningful participation by all stakeholders in the decision-making process and share leadership responsibilities among all school employees.
- Have multiple mechanisms for collecting information related to school priorities and for communicating school-related information to all constituents and members of the school community.
- Use various incentives and acknowledge individual and group progress toward school goals, and
- Cultivate outside resources through involvement in the community and professional networks.

PTA recognizes that school based management decision making must be given time to succeed. School and district leaders must be supportive of the School Based Management process, ensure that communication channels are kept open and provide all
stakeholders with a clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities and accountability.

School-Based/Linked Health Centers

*Adopted April 1987 – Reviewed and deemed relevant May 2014 – Health Commission*

California State PTA supports the concept of school-based/linked health centers, believing all children and youth are entitled to physical and mental health care. PTA believes that the right of the individual to have access to health care is vital to sound health practices. PTA recognizes that adolescents, as a group, are the most under served population in terms of health care. School-based/linked health centers give young people access they might not otherwise have to health care. Such health centers should reflect a commitment to address those health problems that limit a student’s ability to learn.

PTA believes local community support is the key to the success of any center. Parent and student involvement should be a major part of the planning for any school-based/linked health center. PTA further believes that any policy regarding school-based/linked health centers should be developed and monitored by an advisory board, including broad-based parent and student involvement.

School Bus Safety

*Adopted March 1986 – Revised April 2015 – Community Concerns Commission*

California State PTA recognizes that school buses are a safe mode of transportation for students. PTA believes, however, that there is a need for continuing efforts by school districts, the legislature, and other government agencies to study, evaluate, and enact legislation to improve safety in the construction and operation of school buses so that they may be safe for all children.

California State PTA believes efforts to improve school bus safety should include:

- Replacement of Type † school buses built before 7/1/2004 with buses that meet Federal Safety School Bus Regulations;
- Compliance with existing state and federal school bus regulations in the operation of all Type I† and Type II†† school buses;
- Inclusion of a three (3) point restraint per student on buses manufactured before 7/1/2004;
- Periodic monitoring of passenger and school bus driver seat belt usage;
- Continued school bus safety education programs for drivers and passengers including correct restraint usage and periodic school bus evacuation drills; and
- Continued study of additional methods of improving school bus safety measures for students riding in pre-2002 school buses, until such time as these buses may be eliminated from school districts’ fleets.

California State PTA recognizes that, in view of mandatory automobile seat belt/restraint laws, there is a growing public concern regarding the absence of seat belts on school buses.

California State PTA encourages further research into all safety-related aspects of school bus construction, including the feasibility of additional safety equipment, especially on pre-2002 vehicles.

† Type I – large school bus weighing more than 10,000 pounds GVWR (gross vehicle weight rating). Buses manufactured after 7/1/2004 are required to have driver seat belt to meet federal safety standards and a combination of pelvic and upper torso restraint harness for passengers.

†† Type II – school bus designed to carry less than 16 passengers plus driver and weighing less than 10,000 pounds GVWR. Driver seat belt and passenger restraining belts required to meet federal safety standards.

School Closure

*Adopted March 1980 – Revised May 2013 – Education Commission*

California State PTA believes that while school closure is sometimes a necessity to decrease school district problems due to declining enrollment and financial constraints, and is often viewed negatively, it can be an opportunity to improve the quality of education. The real acceptance and success of school closure depends upon demonstrated need, positive attitudes and total involvement of the community. In considering school closure, PTA supports:

- Early and ongoing involvement of all those affected – parents, students, teachers, administrators, staff, board of education, and community;
- Appointment of a broadly representative committee that is charged with making a study that includes alternatives and making recommendations within a specific time period;
- Making all committee meetings open to the public;
- Use of a clear and defined plan of action;
- The concept of a districtwide facilities master plan;
- Formation of goals and objectives that meet Education Code requirements and student needs, and give highest priority to maintenance or improvement of a quality program for every student;
- Wide use of informational meetings and media coverage;
- Specific efforts to overcome negative attitudes and resistance to change;
- Decisions based on elements that include: location of students; amount of disruption; enrollment projections and housing trends; cultural, socio-economic and ethnic balance; safety; transportation; and facilities—size, quality, type, community use, and operating and closing costs;
- Acceptance of the legal authority of the school board to make the final decision;
• Inclusion in the school board’s report of its final decision, the rationale for the assignment of students and personnel, and a plan for community involvement to facilitate a smooth transition;

• A plan assuring community involvement in recommending priorities to the school board for future re-use, redevelopment or disposition of closed sites; and

• Acceptance of the ongoing need for long-range planning.

Through involvement in the community, unit, council and district PTAs can play an important role in achieving understanding of issues in school closure and in building public acceptance for action taken. PTA can provide leadership by attending meetings of school boards, talking with school administrators and parents about the needs of students, and being available to serve on committees.

School Desegregation/Integration

Adopted March 1978 – Reviewed and deemed relevant February 2014 – Education Commission

California State PTA is committed to integrated public schools offering quality education† for all children and youth, and believes:

• Equal educational opportunities should be provided for all students;

• School districts have the responsibility for providing an integrated education for all students;

• Multicultural understanding should be an integral part of the education of all students;

• A desegregated/integrated school must provide opportunity for the development of attitudes and behavior based on the value of the individual;

• A desegregated/integrated school must encourage all students to be fully involved in school activities and to develop to their fullest potential;

• Teachers and other staff members should be trained to understand the needs of all children and youth, as well as the cultural, racial, ethnic, and economic diversity found in California’s society;

• The entire school staff must work consistently to create a school climate of respect for the differences as well as the similarities of all students;

• Support and direction for the development, implementation and evaluation of desegregation/integration programs require the combined efforts of parents, students, the school system, and the entire community;

• PTA must serve as a unifying force for integration by involving the parents of all students in its activities†† and encouraging parent participation in school-sponsored activities; special efforts should be made to include parents residing outside the immediate school community.

†† Refer to Outreach, Diversity and Inclusion.

School-To-Career Technical Education

Adopted March 1985 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Education Commission

California State PTA believes in equal access to education that prepares students to meet the needs of a highly skilled, high technology workplace. A broad-based School-to-Career Technical Education program prepares all students for lifelong learning and successful transition to career and advanced education.

California State PTA believes students need academically rigorous instructional programs that will enable them to think critically, to formulate and solve problems, and to work in teams. Students need opportunities to apply their academic and technical skills to the world of work. School to career instruction should be integrated into the curriculum in the elementary grades to provide an awareness of the wide variety of careers available. Opportunities for career exploration should expand in the middle grades. In high school, students should have the opportunity to participate in a rigorous instructional program that forms a strong foundation for lifelong learning and advanced education.

California State PTA further believes that School-to-Career Technical Education programs should be available to all students to enable them to fulfill their potential and to make informed career decisions. Therefore, such programs should:

• Be broad-based in structure, integrating academic and career coursework for lifelong learning;

• Promote mastery of both academic and career performance standards;

• Create a kindergarten-to-career sequence;

• Link industry needs with education;

• Provide teachers opportunities through professional development to collaborate with each other to develop powerful School-to-Career Technical Education teaching and learning skills;

• Offer career counseling and guidance in making informed educational and occupational choices to meet individual student needs;

• Establish a strong link to community colleges, technical schools and four-year colleges/universities via articulation agreements;

• Have equipment, facilities and supplies that are state-of-the-art;

• Meet health and safety standards;

• Integrate health education into school health programs;

• Establish strong link to community colleges, technical schools and four-year colleges/universities via articulation agreements;

• Establish strong partnerships with business and industry;

• Include measurement of a broad range of education goals related to student achievement and program effectiveness; and
• Include parents, educators, community and business in the development and implementation of the program.

Services for Children of Undocumented Immigrants

Adopted January 1994 – Reviewed and deemed relevant July 2012 – Community Concerns Commission

California State PTA recognizes that the United States is a country of immigrants and that the resulting blend of cultures enriches our nation.

California State PTA believes all children who reside in California, regardless of their parents’ immigration status, have the right of access to a quality public education, adequate food and shelter, and basic health services. PTA also believes the congressional and executive branches of the United States Government must bear full responsibility for federal immigration policies and the resulting fiscal impact on the states.

California State PTA further believes that it is in the interest of all Californians to ensure that all children, including the children of undocumented immigrants, have the opportunity to reach their full potential and become productive members of society.

Special Education†

Adopted March 1983 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Education Commission

California State PTA believes:

• All individuals with exceptional needs should receive a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment; this placement will include appropriate services ensuring access to the core curriculum, based on individual needs;

• Individualized Education Programs (IEP) should be developed on the basis of the needs of the individual student. The accurate assessment of each student’s English, native language, and academic skills is necessary to ensure placement in the program that best meets the educational needs of the students;

• The goal of the IEP should be to provide each student with the academic, vocational and living skills necessary to be a productive and independent adult;

• The IEP team should determine the appropriate program placement, necessary related services, and which curriculum options to offer;

• The general education teacher should be part of the IEP team;

• The school district or the county office of education should provide transportation necessary to meet individual needs as determined in the IEP;

• Parents have the right, obligation and responsibility to be fully involved prior to and throughout the entire process;

• Parent permission must be secured before testing and for assessment evaluations or placement changes in the student’s program;

• Parents must be notified in writing of and given every opportunity to attend all IEP meetings and reviews, and must receive a copy of the complete IEP;

• All teachers and school site personnel should be trained and sensitive to the special needs of exceptional students;

• Funding for non-educational needs of special education students should come from sources other than educational dollars. California State PTA further believes it is essential for the Legislature to appropriate adequate resources to fully fund all mandated special programs and services (Advocacy Chapter).


†† Transition is defined as the acquisition of skills necessary to develop the most independent and productive lifestyle an individual may be capable of achieving.

State Tax Reform

Adopted January 1970 – Reviewed and deemed relevant April 2015 – Legislation Committee

California State PTA recognizes that to make wise decisions on state tax matters all citizens need to understand the overall tax structure, and how state revenues are generated and expended.

California State PTA believes that the total tax structure should be strong and broadly based; that generation of revenues and distribution of the tax burden should be fair and equitable; and that providing adequately for the needs of children and youth should be a funding priority.

California State PTA believes that tax policies should include concepts that:

• Establish and adhere to fiscal responsibility and accountability in government, including

  - Efficient methods of collection, administration and disbursement of tax revenues;

  - Periodic formal reviews of expenditures and revenues; and

  - Maximum local control of expenditures for local services when that serves the best interests of children and youth;

• Provide annually sufficient revenues to fund necessary and desired governmental services, including, but not limited to

  - Allocations from the State General Fund for the public schools in amounts required to provide quality education programs;
- Allocations in addition to public education sufficient to meet basic health and safety needs of children, youth and families, and
- Full funding of mandated services;
- Establish and maintain revenue sources carefully planned and developed to avoid undue burden on the people but that ensure fairness, including
- Reduction of existing tax inequities and avoidance of new ones; and
- New or increased taxes when necessary to meet the needs of the people.

California State PTA further believes that local control and responsibility for generating and expending funds for local services should be encouraged, and promoted through the democratic process based on a majority vote of the public on all issues.

**Status Offenders†**

*Adopted March 1987 – Reviewed and deemed relevant May 2016 – Community Concerns Commission*

California State PTA recognizes the need for community-based programs to help address the problems of status offenders. Such programs should include:

- Family involvement in the problem-solving process;
- Family mediation in crisis situations;
- Counseling, training, work experience, education, and family engagement;
- Cooperation and coordination with law enforcement agencies, social service agencies, and educational institutions;
- Out-of-home placement when in the best interest of the youth and/or the family;
- The provision of safe shelters for temporary placement while families and/or appropriate agencies are contacted.

California State PTA strongly supports the use of School Attendance Review Boards and other social agencies in dealing with problems of habitual truancy and persistent or habitual refusal to obey the reasonable and proper orders or directions of school authorities.

California State PTA will support limited secure detention of status offenders only under the following circumstances:

- Custody shall be separate and apart from alleged or adjudicated delinquents and adult inmates;
- Custody shall be for the purpose of
  - Determining whether there are any outstanding warrants;
  - Locating parent(s)/guardian(s) and arranging for return to home or to jurisdiction of residence;
  - Prevention of child endangerment.

California State PTA will support court-ordered secure detention of status offenders only under the following circumstances:

- Custody shall be separate and apart from alleged or adjudicated delinquents and adult inmates;
- Custody shall be determined by the court and for the least amount of time necessary to resolve the crisis;
- Custody shall be for the purpose of enforcing a court order and providing services that would not be available in the absence of limited secure detention.

† A status offender is any person under the age of 18 years who persistently or habitually refuses to obey the reasonable and proper orders or directions of a parent or guardian, is beyond the control of a parent or guardian, or who is under the age of 18 years when violating any city/county ordinance or state statute establishing a curfew based solely on age. Status offenders are governed by section 801 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code.

**Student Participation in Public Demonstrations**

*Adopted July 2006 – Reviewed and deemed relevant May 2016 – Community Concerns Commission*

California State PTA recognizes that organized demonstrations can increase public awareness of important issues and generate public will to bring about change. Student participation in public demonstrations provides real-life connections to classroom civics lessons and allows students to express their beliefs in a positive and meaningful way. Teachers and administrators can enhance student learning by exploring issues through classroom discussion and after-school forums.

California State PTA believes a school's environment must provide a positive learning environment and physical safety for all students. While California State PTA supports the rights of students to express their beliefs on campus through organized demonstrations, care must be taken to insure that the orderly operation of the school is not disrupted and the physical safety of students is not threatened. Leaving during school hours to attend an off-campus demonstration places the student outside the safety zone of the school and unnecessarily jeopardizes that school's education funding.

PTA believes parents and teachers are instrumental in helping students develop the skills for being responsible and caring citizens, and they should encourage students to find additional advocacy opportunities, including but not limited to:

- Participating in peaceful demonstrations when school is not in session;
- Visiting with legislative representatives;
- Drafting petitions, getting them signed by students, parents and teachers, and delivering them to policymakers;
- Writing articles for school papers;
• Lobbying at school board meetings and asking community, youth advocates and experts to join them;
• Organizing letter-writing campaigns;
• Organizing press conferences and/or writing letters to the editor.

Student Records

Adopted November 1976 – Reviewed and deemed relevant February 2016 – Education Commission

Current federal and state law provides privacy protections for student records and further affords students, parents and guardians the right to obtain access to those records and exercise some control over the release and disclosure of information contained in those records.

California State PTA believes it is important for local school communities to become knowledgeable about student record laws and their proper application to ensure proper protection of student records. PTAs are encouraged to work to expand their knowledge and understanding about the laws that govern student records.

California State PTA encourages school districts to annually carry out the provisions of Education Code Section 49063, which requires:

• Notification to students, parents and guardians of their rights regarding access and control over records;
• Notification to students, parents and guardians of the types of records maintained by the school district; and
• Notification to students, parents and guardians of the position of the school official responsible for student records.

California State PTA believes the timely transfer and receipt of student records is vital to the proper placement of transferring students; therefore, it is important that schools, both public and private, make every effort to immediately transfer student records upon request.

California State PTA believes that school personnel must provide the utmost care toward the protection of students and student records by exercising the following safeguards:

• Ensure the confidentiality of all personal student data that is collected and provide for proper record maintenance which includes the destruction of records when their usefulness ceases; and
• Require proper identification for any person requesting access to student records.

California State PTA encourages all public and private agencies that collect personal data on students to use the same standard of care in protecting student records as required by public schools.

Teen Dating Violence Prevention

Adopted January 2013 – Community Concerns Commission

California State PTA believes in the importance of preventing and eliminating factors that may be detrimental to the health, safety and well-being of all children, families and youth. Recognizing that any circumstance that interferes with a child’s potential to become a healthy, educated, productive citizen places that child at risk, California State PTA believes prevention and intervention programs are vital. (Position Statement Prevention and Intervention Programs)

California State PTA and its units, councils and districts have reaffirmed their commitment to the promotion and support of violence prevention in schools and communities. (Violence Prevention in Schools resolution 1999)

According to the California Student Survey (CSS) 2009/2010, at least one incident of physical dating violence was reported by 3.0% of 9th graders and 7.0% of 11th graders.

Among students who had a boy/girlfriend, the rates of dating violence were 5.4% in 9th grade and 11.0% in 11th grade.

California State PTA believes children are the future and must be protected from harm. PTA further believes all children are entitled to live and grow in an atmosphere of love and respect, and no child should be subjected to physical, psychological, verbal or sexual abuse. (Position Statement Child Abuse)

The home and school are two of the strongest influences in shaping attitudes of children. All schools must be deeply involved with positive human relations in the education of the child.

To protect our children and youth from teen dating violence California State PTA supports state legislation that:

• Authorizes school districts to provide education programs and policies that promote healthy relationships and prevent teen dating violence to pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, through curricular, extracurricular, and school climate-improvement activities;
• Authorizes school districts to work in partnership with parents, caregivers, and youth, domestic violence, sexual assault, or other appropriate community-based organizations, as deemed appropriate by the school district, to provide these education programs;
• Authorizes school districts that choose to provide education programs that promote healthy relationships and prevent teen dating violence to use research-based materials that are appropriate for pupils of all races, genders, sexual orientations, gender identities, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and for pupils with disabilities;
• Authorizes training for all school staff, including any security guards or police personnel that work at the school, on dating abuse and sexual assault, as well as how to handle reports of dating abuse by students,
Television Programming

Adopted November 1978 – Reviewed and deemed relevant March 2009 – Communications Commission

California State PTA fully supports the First Amendment and is opposed to and will continue to oppose government censorship of the media and will oppose any attempt at censorship by any organization or group.

California State PTA believes, however, that the First Amendment was not designed to protect the economic interests of broadcasters and/or advertisers. Because federal communication law requires television and radio broadcasters to broadcast in the “public interest, convenience and necessity,” and because the Children’s Television Act of 1990, Public Law 101-437 requires stations to air shows that “serve the educational and informational needs of children” and puts a limit on the number of minutes of ads per hour in children’s programs, it is the responsibility of station owners/management to provide programming meeting that criteria.

Although cable operators and cable programmers (networks) are generally less regulated, California State PTA supports similar standards for the cable industry to voluntarily provide responsible programming for children.

Parents should communicate their concerns about programming to broadcasters, networks and advertisers, and encourage them to provide educational and responsible programming for children and youth.

Vaccinations

Adopted May 2015 – Health Commission

California State PTA believes in the importance of preventing and eliminating factors that may be detrimental to the health, safety and well-being of all children, families and youth.

Recognizing that any circumstance that interferes with a child’s potential to become a healthy, educated, productive, citizen places that child at risk, California State PTA believes prevention programs are vital.

California State PTA believes that vaccination is a proven deterrent to diseases that in previous generations have impacted large numbers of children annually in the past.

Despite the rather short history of vaccination, compared with the millennia of various human plagues and pestilences, more than a dozen major infectious diseases (most notably, smallpox, poliomyelitis, rabies, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, Haemophilus influenzae type b disease, measles, mumps, and rubella) have been controlled in many parts of the world [1]. (Journal of Infectious Diseases, Volume 201, Issue 11)

California State PTA believes that all children, with the exception of those who are medically vulnerable, must receive the prescribed vaccinations in the age-appropriate timeline, in order to protect themselves, their families, their communities, and medically vulnerable children.

Year-Round Education

Adopted March 1986 – Reviewed and deemed relevant February 2016 – Education Commission

California State PTA recognizes that year-round education can provide an opportunity to improve the quality of education and maximizes the utilization of existing school facilities. The acceptance and success of year-round education is enhanced by involving the parents/guardians, students, teachers, and community in a study of year-round education prior to implementation. PTA leaders should attend school board meetings, discuss students’ needs with administrators, students and parents/guardians, and be available to serve on year-round education study committees.

In considering year-round education PTA supports:

- Early involvement of parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, staff, students, school board members, community and youth-serving agencies;
• Adoption of goals and objectives that meet student needs and California Education Code requirements and give the highest priority to providing a quality program for every student;
• Decisions on factors that include the health and welfare of students; facilities use; teacher availability; voluntary versus mandatory desegregation plans; enrollment and housing trends; cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic balance; and the commitment of the community to coordinate youth services;
• Specific efforts of the study committee to identify and meet actual community needs and, if a decision for year-round education has been made, to overcome the natural resistance to change;
• Assignment of students within a family to similar or like tracks whenever feasible;
• The legal authority of the school board to make the final decision;
• Continued community involvement following transition to year-round education to ensure a positive climate for quality education;
• Cooperation of community agencies and organizations that serve children in adapting and providing programs that meet the needs of the students;
• Opportunities for students to participate in special classes, extracurricular and co-curricular activities in a multi-track system;
• Communication that will keep parents/guardians, teachers, and students informed throughout the year; and
• Providing assistance to the principal and support staff who encounter additional responsibilities in the year-round schedule.

Youth Involvement
Adopted March 2005 – Revised October 2010 – Student Involvement Committee

California State PTA values the involvement of youth in accomplishing common goals and supporting California State PTA’s mission. California State PTA encourages youth to become advocates, community leaders and responsible adults. Further, it acknowledges the insights, perspective and voice youth provides.

California State PTA welcomes student participation on its Board of Managers and includes students on its commissions and committees. California State PTA believes that student contributions build stronger and healthier communities.

California State PTA encourages PTAs to support efforts to develop youth participation by
• Soliciting input from youth about budgetary and policy proposals that affect them;
• Linking youth involvement opportunities to existing local governmental, school, and state programs that promote voluntary civic and community service;
• Encouraging legislative bodies at all levels of government to include local youth in their policymaking efforts;
• Encouraging schools and community programs to provide meaningful opportunities for youth to participate in planning and implementation;
• Instilling in youth a sense of civic responsibility, citizenship, and leadership through active participation.

The contributions of youth in working with adults will enhance programs that serve youth and will strengthen communities.

Zero to Three Years: A Critical Period in a child’s Development
Adopted February 2017 – Health & Community Concerns Commission

The first three years of life are a period of incredible growth in all areas of a baby’s development. Research shows that, to ensure a good start in life, all infants and toddlers need good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences. Programs and services that address these areas are critical. California State PTA supports healthy child development and the practices that enhance it.

California State PTA believes that parents are the experts on their children, and there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to raising children. As young children are just beginning to develop self-control, challenging behavior is common and expected in the years from birth to three. California State PTA believes families should learn how the earliest relationships can promote healthy brain development, how young children build social and emotional skills, and ways to support language and literacy development.

All children are unique. Celebrating, nurturing, and supporting developmental milestones from birth to three years is one of the joys of parenting. Parents should learn how to nurture a baby’s social, emotional, intellectual, language, and motor development from birth.

The parent-child relationship is the foundation of healthy development. A child’s development depends on both the traits he was born with (nature), and what he experiences (nurture). All areas of development, social, emotional, intellectual, language, and motor, are linked. Each depends on, and influences, the others. What children experience, including how their parents respond to them, shapes their development as they adapt to the world.

• Children need to develop self-control in order to follow rules, understand limits, and cope with strong feelings. Developing self-control begins at birth and continues throughout childhood.
• Children need positive parenting, taking an approach that is sensitive to children’s individual needs and addressing the typical challenges that arise in early childhood with empathy and respect.
• California State PTA believes that a range of early intervention services offers very young children the opportunity to develop skills and abilities that will ready them for school and life. California State PTA encourages parents and families to take advantage of resources to help them maximize the health and wellness habits of their child.

• Children need access to early screening and intervention services that address challenges to their healthy development. The earlier a child is connected with intervention services, the faster a child gets back on the right track.

• Children need access to high-quality, affordable early health care including mental health, early education and family support services. Programs and services that address these areas are critical. To be effective, programs must be organized within cohesive systems that coordinate and align a broad array of services. To support the healthy development of all children, states and communities must provide comprehensive, coordinated, well-funded systems of high-quality, prenatal-to-age-3 services that foster success in school and life.
Where We Stand: Issue-Related Guidelines

California State PTA has created a number of guidelines to assist unit, council and district PTAs that are considering taking action on issues. Detailed information on the following topics can be obtained through capta.org.

Guidelines included in the PTA Toolkit in this section will automatically sunset five years after being approved unless reviewed and deemed relevant or revised for another five years.

Background Checks of Mobile Food Vendors

*March 1999 – Reviewed and deemed relevant March 2012 – Community Concerns*

The following guidelines have been developed to assist unit, council and district PTAs to ensure the safety of children who patronize mobile food vendors.

Research current and pending city and county ordinances related to background checks and issuance of permits and licenses required of mobile food vendors (i.e., trucks, coaches, bicycle carts, push carts...).

Determine whether your city or county has an ordinance regulating the distance mobile food vendors must keep from school sites, school bus stops, and posted regional bus stops per California Penal Code section 626 (c) (2) subsections (a) and (b).

Advocate that current city, county and state agencies:

- • Prohibit the employment and/or licensing of vendors who have prior criminal records involving moral turpitude and/or illegal chemicals;
- • Prior to assignment require background checks that include fingerprinting;
- • Mandate that valid photo I.D. be worn visibly;
- • Law enforcement agencies have authority to enforce current and proposed ordinances.

Conduct community safety awareness meetings which include the ordinances and regulations regarding mobile food vendors.

Use PTA newsletters to inform the general membership about the issue.

Support legislation to amend the California State Penal Code related to background checks to include mobile food vendors as well as persons who have supervisory or disciplinary power over minors.

Condom Availability Through the Schools

*January 1999 – Revised August 2016 – Health*

California State PTA is an organization concerned about all aspects of the health and well-being of children and youth. The PTA recognizes that many students are sexually active and that this may result in pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection leading to AIDS and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

Schools contribute to the achievement of public health goals in conjunction with their educational commitments.

Through coordinated school health programs that include access to health services, health education, and the involvement of parent and community coalitions, the health and well being of all students can be promoted and protected.

An increase in reported sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS and HPV, among adolescents has prompted many communities to take action to protect their youth. One proven method is to provide comprehensive sexuality education along with school board programs that make condoms available to sexually active youth. Numerous national health organizations have adopted policies in support of school condom availability as a component of comprehensive sexuality education. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that the proper and consistent use of latex or polyurethane condoms can greatly reduce a person’s risk of acquiring or transmitting sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS and HPV.

While PTA has no specific position on school districts making condoms available to students, if a school district elects to do so, PTA urges that the condoms should be made available only under the following specific conditions:

- • That strategies for preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and HPV should be taught, including abstinence from sexual relations and intravenous drug use.
- • That the local school board has an existing condom availability policy.
- • That a licensed health professional provide condoms only upon request.
- • That verbal and written instructions be given in the proper use of condoms including information about spermicide(s) approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as information on condom failure at the time they are given to students.
- • That any parent or guardian who objects to his or her student receiving a condom may so inform the school in writing. (The law requires school districts to notify parents when a condom availability policy is established.)

PTAs should not assume the responsibility for making condoms available either with financial support or volunteer assistance due to the potential risk of liability.
Dealing with Establishments That Sell Gasoline and Alcohol Concurrently

March 1992 – Reviewed and deemed relevant March 2012 – Community Concerns and Health

Since 1987, establishments that concurrently sell gasoline and alcohol fell under local regulations. The State enacted this legislation to ensure that local government should not be preempted in the valid exercise of its land use authority (Section 23790.5 of the Business and Professions Code). Such establishments could include bars, restaurants, liquor stores, supermarkets, and gasoline mini-marts.

The State did define conditions (Section 23790.5 of the Business and Professions Code) that must be met by the establishments engaging in the concurrent sale of motor vehicle fuel with beer and wine for off-premises consumption:

- No beer or wine shall be displayed within five feet of the cash register or the front door unless it is in a permanently affixed cooler.
- No advertisement of alcoholic beverages shall be displayed at motor fuel islands.
- No sale of alcoholic beverages shall be made from a drive-in window.
- No display or sale of beer or wine shall be made from an ice tub.
- No beer or wine advertising shall be located on motor fuel islands and no self-illuminated advertising for beer or wine shall be located on buildings or windows.
- Employees on duty between the hours of 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. who sell beer or wine shall be at least 21 years of age.

Cities, however, can zone specific areas where liquor can be sold, keeping it out of residential and school areas.

PTAs may find that some of these establishments are being placed in locations too close to residential and school areas or that these establishments are not following conditions mandated by the State or laws established by the local government. Dependent upon the situation, the local unit, council or district PTA must be prepared with accurate data prior to confronting local government with their complaints.

Do Research:
- Contact members of the Board of Supervisors and City Council (or the Planning Department staff) regarding their policies and/or ordinances regulating the sale of alcoholic beverages at establishments that sell gasoline and the licensing fees paid by such establishments.
- Check with police, sheriff’s and California highway patrol departments to determine number of teenage deaths and injuries in your community which are related to alcohol and driving.
- Contact your local government offices regarding their local zoning for off-sale alcoholic beverages.
- Contact the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) in your area about the location of a particular establishment and its proximity to schools or homes.

Share information and express concern with:
- Hours of operations;
- Noise and litter control;
- Lighting and exterior signs;
- Architectural design review;
- Adequate and functional ingress/egress (entrance/exit) and parking for automobiles;
- Appropriate set-backs from front, rear and side lot lines;
- Landscaping;
- Relations to housing, schools, churches;
- Proliferation and undue concentration of similar outlets in the area;
- Substantial change in mode or character of operation.

Attend public hearings before Planning Commission, City Council and/or Board of Supervisors in your community and express PTA concerns on limiting development projects that would allow sale of alcoholic beverages at establishments that also sell gasoline, even though it will bring extra revenues by license fees.

Support local legislation on these issues.

Refer to the California State PTA resolution “Regulation of Liquor Licenses Near Schools,” May 1997 for further information.

Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Abuse Prevention and Awareness

January 1999 – Revised February 2014 – Health

PTA believes that prevention efforts must involve the home, the school, and the community seeking effective ways to address the use and abuse of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and other nicotine-containing products, such as e-cigarettes and other products as yet to be created. The issues should be faced through improving family communication skills, knowledge of primary prevention education programs in the school, and developing community programs.

PTA believes every child has the right to develop to his fullest potential and is firmly committed to helping ensure that development through proactive methods. To fulfill this commitment, PTA initiates and supports drug, alcohol, tobacco and other nicotine-containing products, such as e-cigarettes and other products as yet to be created, legislation aimed at education, abuse prevention and control.

These guidelines have been developed to facilitate parent involvement to assist PTAs in addressing the problems of drug, alcohol, tobacco and other nicotine-containing products, such as e-cigarettes and other products as yet to be created, and to identify resources for information and further assistance.
Education

The parent, school, and community can heighten awareness by learning:

- What is happening regarding new drug look-alikes;
- What changes have been made in laws concerning use and misuse of controlled substances, such as stiffer penalties for use and possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and other nicotine-containing products, such as e-cigarettes and other products as yet to be created or near school property;
- What teacher/staff training is effective in education and primary prevention methods;
- What is the school policy regarding
  - Students who use alcohol or take drugs at school
  - Sale of alcohol or drugs on or near school property
  - Teachers/staff with alcohol or drug problems
  - Teachers/staff involved in sale of alcohol or drugs
  - Drug, alcohol, and tobacco education curriculum (K-12)
  - Teacher/staff training programs for teaching about abuse
  - Other school drug, alcohol, tobacco and other nicotine-containing products, such as e-cigarettes and other products as yet to be created prevention programs;
- What is the mass media influence;
- What is the relationship between school personnel and law enforcement;
- What is the proliferation of mini-marts selling alcohol, tobacco and other nicotine-containing products, such as e-cigarettes and other products as yet to be created;
- What are early intervention resources;
- How to use law enforcement as a positive support system for the community.

To set and attain their goals PTAs should:

- Be aware of school and neighborhood drug and alcohol environments;
- Observe and talk with parents, children and youth;
- Meet with teachers, counselors, principals, and members of the community;
- Seek data from local law enforcement agencies, as well as the California Alcohol Beverage Control.

PTAs should understand school district policy and work with administrators to:

- Learn about the school primary prevention education plan;
- Encourage establishment of a school primary prevention plan, if one does not exist;
- Examine curriculum of county and local school district offices;
- Obtain information from school district superintendent or school board to request drug and alcohol, tobacco and other nicotine-containing products, such as e-cigarettes and other products as yet to be created and abuse prevention education and its implementation;
- Support limiting the proliferation and availability of alcohol vendors accessible to youth;
- Examine city zoning policies on vendor locations and proximity to schools.

PTAs can learn about parent education resources through:

- The county coordinator of drug, alcohol, tobacco and other nicotine-containing products, such as e-cigarettes and other products as yet to be created abuse;
- Well-established drug, alcohol, tobacco and other nicotine-containing products, such as e-cigarettes and other products as yet to be created, abuse agencies, many of which have a variety of parent communications and abuse information groups;
- Allied agencies providing drug, alcohol, tobacco and other nicotine-containing products, such as e-cigarettes and other products as yet to be created, and abuse awareness classes;
- District PTA and California State PTA resource people trained in parent education and communication skills.

Prevention

There is no single primary prevention program to fit all needs. Numerous approaches and activities have been developed. A combination of methods may be suitable for your community. Methods used must be appropriate for their respective target groups: elementary students, secondary students, parents, families, community, and school administrators. Successful programs include the following components:

- Provide accurate information;
- Stress self-esteem, communication skills, decision making, understanding of personal values;
- Utilize peer counseling and peer tutoring, including older students working with younger students;
- Provide alternatives to the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and other nicotine-containing products, such as e-cigarettes and other products as yet to be created that are attuned to community involvement as well as school environment;
- Offer work experience programs, career education, family and parent involvement;
- Offer family programs stressing communication skills, problem solving, counseling and support groups;
- Encourage support of law enforcement agencies collaborating with merchants and businesses to solve and alleviate problems;
- Seek cooperation of merchants, including agreement to a Merchant’s Pledge not to sell alcohol and tobacco to youth or to adults who buy for youth;
• Provide certificates of commendation to community members and agencies that give exemplary service in the area of awareness and prevention;
• Offer school climate assessment programs designed to change negative school environment and attitudes as well as curriculum;
• Form networks within individual PTAs and within council and district PTAs for communication and to work toward a common goal.

Evaluate the primary program by asking the following questions:
• Is it appropriate for the target group?
• Are teachers or facilitators trained in the primary prevention programs?
• Have students been involved in planning and participating in programs?
• Do the programs develop strategies specified in the description of types of primary prevention programs?
• Is the program accountable to some established agency, such as the school district, a governmental agency or a community agency?
• Have provisions been made for: continuing the program, evaluation, follow-up?

Criteria for Evaluating Drug and Alcohol Education Material

In evaluating drug and alcohol education material, check the following:
• Background and reputation of those who prepared the material;
• Physical appearance of the material;
• Timeliness of material: is it current and up-to-date;
• Readability: vocabulary, type size, organization, etc.;
• Point of view expressed;
• Unique information and quality of material;
• Ability to interest reader;
• No “put on” or “put down” of the reader;
• Relation of material to objectives;
• Objective and non-judgmental in tone;
• Sufficient amount of information;
• Bibliography and cross reference index.

Studying the Impact of Video Games

January 1993 – Reviewed and deemed relevant
March 2012 – Community Concerns

PTA’s concerns regarding the impact of video games include: the location of these machines, number of machines permitted at any given location, impact on street and sidewalk congestion where machines are concentrated, accessibility to the machines by students during school hours where little or no supervision exists, occurrence of public disturbances and petty crimes in the vicinity of these games.

California State PTA encourages its unit, council and district PTAs to be aware of and to educate their membership and the community regarding activities of young people at business establishments having video game machines and the impact these activities have on school attendance, alcohol and drug activity, gambling and gang involvement.

A unit, council or district PTA undertaking an educational action program should consider the following general recommendations:

A. Establish a study committee to:
   1. Explore the number and location of establishments which operate video game machines;
   2. Explore the types of video games sold by retailers for home game systems as well as personal computers;
   3. Research existence of any city or county ordinances, police permit regulations and other regulations relating to video game sites;
   4. Consult with school district personnel, law enforcement agencies, city or county officials and other concerned community groups to determine the effect of existing video game machines or arcades on the schools and the community;
   5. Consult with or include in the study existing video game machine operators in order to encourage voluntary cooperation with the study group’s recommendations;
   6. Work with the community to determine a mutually acceptable program to reduce or prevent any existing or future negative impact video game sites may have on the schools and communities.

B. Many communities have found the following objectives to be effective in reducing potentially detrimental effects of video game machines:
   1. Regulations which restrict the location of video game sites to areas of the community that are some distance from schools;
   2. Restrictions on the number of video game machines permitted to one location;
   3. Charges for licenses to operate such machines or arcades to show reflected costs of added community services required by the installation of such sites, e.g., trash pickup, police protection;
   4. Regulations governing the hours of operation of video game machines that include restriction of access by minors during normal school hours;
   5. Requirements that there be adequate supervision of video game sites to insure safety and school attendance;
   6. Requirements that zoning ordinances be reviewed to insure video game machines/arcades are located in areas where their presence will not disrupt or violate community planning requirements;
Suicide Prevention Education and Awareness

January 1999 – Revised February 2015 – Health and Family Engagement

PTA members’ long standing concern about suicide prevention was formalized by the adoption of the 1983 resolution “Suicide Prevention Education and Awareness.” These guidelines are to assist unit, council and district PTAs in the implementation of the resolution.

The purpose of this guideline is to provide a roadmap for PTA members toward resources that can assist them in the development and implementation of activities and programs concerning suicide prevention focusing in the home, school, and community.

PTA’s focus is on youth and statistics showed nationally that in 2009:
• 13.8% of students in grades 9-12 seriously considered suicide in the previous 12 months (17.4% of females and 10.5% of males).
• 6.3% of students reported making at least one suicide attempt in the previous 12 months (8.1% of females and 4.6% of males).
• 1.9% of students had made a suicide attempt that resulted in an injury, poisoning, or an overdose that required medical attention (2.3% of females and 1.6% of males).

In 2014, the CDC reported that 60% of high school students claimed that they had thought about committing suicide, and around 9% of them said that they tried killing themselves at least once. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)
• 19.3% of high school students have seriously considered killing themselves
• 14.5% of high school students made actual plans for committing suicide
• 900,000 youth planned their suicides during an episode of major depression

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among 15 to 24-year-olds. Even more disturbing is the fact that suicide is the fourth leading cause of death for children between the ages of 10 and 14. More people survive suicide attempts than actually die. However, they are often seriously injured and need medical care. Our goal, then, is to stop suicide attempts.

• Requirements that where video game machines are already in place, steps for review of the permits and/or licenses issued for such operations be adapted to provide for evaluation and review of such licenses with appropriate school and community input.

7. Requirements that retailers who sell video games for home game systems, or personal computers should label and separate games that portray violent or graphic material from those that are not violent or graphic.

8. Requirements that retailers who sell video games for home game systems, or personal computers should label and separate games that portray violent or graphic material from those that are not violent or graphic.

(The citation for the statistics referenced above is: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention and Control http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/Suicide_Data_Sheet-a.pdf)

The California Department of Education’s Health Framework for California Public Schools, adopted in 2002, outlines a course of study with two factors central to its new approach to health education; emphasis placed on developing lifelong, positive health-related attitudes and behaviors and health education supported by a comprehensive schoolwide system to promote children’s health, developed and sustained through collaborative efforts of school personnel, parents, school board members, community leaders, and health and social services agencies and providers.

The Health Framework for California Public Schools recognizes that an important element of mental and emotional health is a positive view of one’s self and a sense of a relationship to others. The Framework encourages students:
• To take pride in their personal identity,
• To view self-esteem as being based not only on one’s accomplishments, but also on personal values and ethical considerations,
• To make healthy decisions, and
• To refuse to take part in negative behaviors without the fear of rejection.

In order for parents to engage in efforts to prevent suicide attempts, it is useful to become familiar with some of the characteristics associated with suicide, which may or may not be direct causes. There are several different factors that may lead a teenager to take his or her life, but the most common is depression.

Feelings of hopelessness and anxiety, along with feelings of being trapped in a life that one can’t handle, are very real contributors to teen suicide. In some cases, teenagers believe that suicide is the only way to solve their problems. The pressures of life seem too much to cope with, and some teenagers look at suicide as a welcome escape.

Risk Factors:
• Divorce of parents
• Violence in the home
• Death of someone close to the teenager
• Family history of suicide
• Family history of child maltreatment
• Previous suicide attempt(s)
• The suicide of a friend or someone he or she “knows” online
• History of mental disorders, particularly clinical depression
• History of alcohol and substance abuse
• Feelings of hopelessness
• Rejection by friends or peers
• Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
• Cultural and religious beliefs (e.g., belief that suicide is noble resolution of a personal dilemma)
• Local epidemics of suicide
• Isolation, a feeling of being cut off from other people
• Inability to find success at school
• Barriers to accessing mental health treatment
• Loss (relational, social, work or financial)
• Physical illness
• Easy access to lethal methods
• Unwillingness to seek help because of the stigma attached to mental health and substance abuse disorders or to suicidal thoughts

It is important to be on the lookout for signs that your teen may attempt suicide. What is so difficult about some of these warning signs of teen suicide is that some of them are similar to normal adolescent behavior. The teenage years are a trying time, and sometimes normal behavior looks a lot like possibly destructive behavior. But it doesn’t hurt to look into the following warning signs of teen suicide:

• Talks about death and/or suicide (maybe even with a joking manner)
• Plans ways to kill him or herself
• Expresses worries that nobody cares about him or her
• Has attempted suicide in the past
• Dramatic changes in personality and behavior
• Withdraws from interacting with friends and family
• Shows signs of depression
• Shows signs of a substance abuse problem
• Begins to act recklessly and engage in risk-taking behaviors
• Begins to give away sentimental possessions
• Spends time online interacting with people who glamorize suicide and maybe even form suicide pacts

Protective factors buffer individuals from risks such as suicidal thoughts and behavior:

• Effective clinical care for mental, physical, and substance abuse disorders
• Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions and support for help seeking
• Family and community support (Connectedness)
• Support from ongoing medical and mental health care relationships
• Skills in problem solving, conflict resolutions, and nonviolent ways of handling disputes. (Youth Development and Resiliency)
• Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support instincts for self-preservation

It is important to treat your child with respect and understanding. Show your unconditional love, and offer emotional support. It is important that a teen considering suicide feel loved and wanted. Show your teenager that it is possible to overcome life’s challenges, and make sure that he or she knows that you are willing to help out.

Youth Development is the name of an approach that focuses on building youths’ assets rather than repairing their deficits. Youth development strategies help most young people, including those challenged by multiple risks and adversities, to grow into thriving adults.

School connectedness means that students have a sense of belonging at school and perceive that teachers are fair and care about them. A study of 20,000 students in grades 7-12 found that school connectedness was the only school-related factor that consistently protected students from engaging in unhealthy behaviors.

Developmental assets include those relating to the individual and those relating to his or her environment. A study involving more than 99,000 students in grades 6-12 investigated the role of 40 developmental assets in protecting adolescents from a variety of health-compromising behaviors.

Research on resilience identifies caring relationships, messages of high expectations, and opportunities for participation and contribution as factors supporting positive youth development. The presence of a committed caregiver, a broad community support system, and engaging social skills were the three most powerful predictors that children at risk would grow up to be healthy, functioning adults.

Suicide prevention plans at public schools can involve the support of families, schools, and communities working together as part of a comprehensive Coordinated School Health system that considers resiliency, and youth development assets in pursuit of the goal of preventing suicide attempts.

Exemplary school-based prevention programs take the following steps:

• Enlist the support of administration.
• Advocate for a school district wide suicide-prevention policy.
• Institute training for faculty and all school staff, which includes intervention and aftermath approaches.
• Institute a school crisis response team.
• Institute parent/guardian education regarding youth suicide
• Institute community “gatekeeper” training.
• Implement skills training and social support programs for students.
• Implement school activities that increase students’ connection to the school.
• Develop supportive school-community partnerships

A coordinated school health system includes health education, physical education, health services, nutrition services, psychological and counseling services, a safe and healthy school environment, health promotion for staff, and parent and community involvement. The system is designed to protect and promote the health and well being of students and staff. One way parents
can get involved is by serving on School Health/Wellness Councils.

**Resources**


American Association of Suicidology. Youth Suicide Fact Sheet; http://www.suicidology.org/web/guest/stats-and-tools/fact-sheets

Search Institute, The Banks Building 615 First Avenue NE, Suite 125 Minneapolis, MN 55413; www.search-institute.org

Getting Results: Developing Safe and Healthy Kids; www.gettingresults.org

California State PTA Resolution – Student Substance Abuse: Alternatives to Zero Tolerance – 2003

Youth Suicide-Prevention Guidelines for California Schools – 2005; http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh/documents/suicideprev.doc

Youth Suicide Prevention Resources, California Department of Education; www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh/suicideprevres.asp


What is Coordinated School Health? – California Department of Education; http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/cs/csh.asp


U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; www.samhsa.gov

Advocacy Topic Index

The Advocacy Topic Index is intended to provide quick access to relevant PTA positions in a particular subject area, and may not be all-inclusive. When reviewing the resolutions, position statements and guidelines listed for a particular topic, please refer also to the General Principles and Legislation Planks in the California State PTA Legislation Platform and to California State PTA Legislation Policies and Procedures for an overall understanding of PTA’s legislative direction. Resolutions (R) are published in the Resolutions Book and posted on the California State PTA website at capta.org.

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