

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Adopted by Board of Managers March 1989

Reviewed by Board of Managers April 2010

- WHEREAS,** The California State PTA believes: Freedom, its rights and privileges as guaranteed under the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, carries responsibilities for the individual as well as for society (from the Board of Managers Position Statement “Maintaining Freedom to Learn”); and
- WHEREAS,** The American Federation of Teachers and National School Boards Association have advocated the strengthening of the Citizenship curriculum in all public schools; and
- WHEREAS,** PTA believes that children and youth should be taught the citizenship rights and responsibilities necessary to sustain, support and strengthen our free society; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to urge their school districts to strengthen their Citizenship curricula; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to strengthen the Citizenship curricula by establishing a sequential curricula for K-12 and that he urge school districts throughout the state to do the same; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge the California State Legislature to enact legislation to fund strengthening the teaching of Citizenship in the public schools.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Initial findings of a study by the center for Civic Education indicates that high school students do not understand the basic concepts pertinent to the development and functions of our Constitution and national government. The findings were announced by the Center’s executive director, Charles N. Quigley, at a press conference with former Chief Justice Warren Burger.

Although students have learned some important milestones in our Constitutional history, they do not have a very profound understanding of our system of government. For example: seven out of ten do not know that in the American political tradition government derives its authority from the consent of the governed; two out of three do not know the essential difference between constitutional and dictatorial government; two-thirds do not know the importance of the Magna Carta; and, about six in ten do not know the meaning of due process of law.