

# Advocacy

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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 (4.2.4) and to California State PTA Legislation Policies and Procedures (4.2.5) 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 www.capta.org. Position Statements (PS) are printed in *Toolkit* section 4.5. Guidelines (G) are printed in *Toolkit* section 4.6.

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R=Convention Resolution  
R\*= Board of Managers Resolution  
PS=Position Statement  
G=Guideline

C=Communications  
CC=Community Concerns  
E=Education  
H=Health

L=Legislation Committee  
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R=Convention Resolution  
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PS=Position Statement  
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L=Legislation Committee  
M=Member Services  
P=Parent Involvement  
S=Student Involvement

Title	Commission Section
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<b>SEXUALLY-TRANSMITTED DISEASE:</b>		
AIDS Prevention Education in the Curriculum (1988) R	E/H	----
Condom Availability Through the Schools (2005) G	H	4.6.3
Venereal Disease Education and Control (1973) R	H	----
<b>SMOKING (SEE SUBSTANCE ABUSE):</b>		
<b>SPECIAL NEEDS (SEE CATEGORICAL PROGRAMS):</b>		
Attention Deficit Disorder in Children (1998) R	H	----
Closed Caption Television (1978) R	C	----
Education: Categorical Programs (2005) PS	E	4.5.14
Education of English Language Learners (2004) PS	E	4.5.13
Educationally Handicapped Children (1972) R	E	----
Encroachment: Effect on Public Education (2005) PS	E	4.5.23
Equal Access to School Improvement Program Funds (1983) R	E	----
Extended Educational Services for the Handicapped (1967) R	E	----
Full Federal Funding for Services to Immigrants (1993) R*	L	----
Grade Retention (1991) R	E	----
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Underfunding (2007) R	E/L	----
Learning Disabilities and Learning Disabilities in Gifted Children (2000) R	E	----
School Absenteeism/Dropouts (1986) R	CC	----
Services for Children of Undocumented Immigrants (2008) PS	CC	4.5.64
Special Education (2004) PS	E	4.5.65

Title	Commission	Section
<b>STANDARDS:</b>		
Assessment and Testing (2005) G	E	4.6.1
Grade Retention (1991) R	E	----
Assessment (Statewide) (2009) PS	E	4.5.2
Student Assessment, Achievement and Accountability (2000) R	E	----
<b>SUBSTANCE ABUSE:</b>		
Alcohol and Tobacco Use in Youth: Education, Prevention and Intervention (2002) R	H	----
Alcohol Beverage Advertising That Targets Youth (1992) R	H	----
Alcohol-Related Driver Education (1982) R	CC/H	----
Ban on Drug Paraphernalia (1981) R	H	----
Community Drug Abuse Prevention Programs (1970) R	H	----
Control of Look-Alike Stimulants and Depressant Drugs (1982) R	H	----
Drug Abuse Program Funding – Penalty Assessment (1980) R	H	----
Drug Advertising (1970) R	H	----
Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Abuse Prevention and Awareness (2005) G	H	4.6.5
Education on Health Hazards in the Use of Anabolic Steroids (1989) R	E/H	----
Fire Safe Cigarettes (1983) R*	CC/H	----
Dealing with Establishments That Sell Gasoline and Alcohol Concurrently (2005) G	CC/H	4.6.4
Limiting Concurrent Sales of Gasoline and Alcohol and the Proliferation of Outlets (1985) R	CC	----
Prevention and Intervention Programs (2005) PS	H/P	4.5.51
Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse (1979) R	H	----
Prohibiting the Promotion of Tobacco Products (1987) R	H	----
Regulation of Liquor Licenses Near Schools (1997) R	CC	----
Regulation of the Display and Sale to Minors of Drug-Use Information and Paraphernalia Including Cigarette Papers (1979) R	CC/H	----
Sale of Tobacco Products to Minors (1988) R	CC/H	----
Save Our Kids (1983) R	P	----
Smoking and Health (1964) R	H	----
Social Host Accountability and Underage Drinking (2009) R	CC/H	----
Student Substance Abuse - Alternatives to Zero Tolerance (2003) R	CC	----
Substance Use and Abuse During Pregnancy (1987) R	H	----
Tobacco Advertising That Targets Minors (1993) R	H	----
<b>SUICIDE PREVENTION:</b>		
Mental Illness: Treatment and Support (1999) R	H	----
Suicide Prevention Education and Awareness (1983) R	H/P	----
Suicide Prevention Education and Awareness (2005) G	H	4.6.9
<b>TAXES:</b>		
Education: Opposing Vouchers, Tuition Tax Credits and Deductions as Systems of Education Aid (2008) PS	E	4.5.16
Local School Parcel Tax Measure Threshold Reduction (2008) R	E/L	----
Lowering 2/3 Vote Requirement on School and Library Bonds (1999) R	L	----
Property Tax Limitation (1978) R	L	----
State Tax Reform (1991) R	L	----
State Tax Reform (2009) PS	L	4.5.66
Tuition Tax Credits (1982) R*	E	----

Title	Commission	Section
<u>TEACHERS (SEE CREDENTIALLED AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL):</u>		
<u>TECHNOLOGY:</u>		
Computer Technology in Education (1983) R.....	E	----
Educational Technology Funding (1995) R .....	E	----
Online Safeguards for Internet Use by Children and Youth (1997) R.....	C	----
Television/Screen Time Awareness(2006) R.....	H	----
<u>TELEVISION PROGRAMMING AND VIEWING (SEE MASS MEDIA):</u>		
<u>TOBACCO (SEE SUBSTANCE ABUSE):</u>		
<u>TOXIC/HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:</u>		
Location of Toxic/Hazardous Materials Sites (1985) R .....	H	----
<u>TOYS:</u>		
Bicycle Safety Helmets (1991) R.....	CC	----
Mandatory Use of Motorcycle Safety Helmets (1974) R .....	CC	----
Online Safeguards for Internet Use by Children and Youth (1997) R.....	CC	----
Paintball Gun Control (1993) R .....	CC	----
Safety Helmets for Scooter, Skateboard and Skate Users Under the Age of 18 (2001) R.....	CC	----
Save Our Kids (1983) R .....	P	----
Studying the Impact of Video Games (2005) G.....	CC	4.6.8
Television and Video Viewing (2008) PS .....	C	4.5.70
Television/Screen Time Awareness (2006) R.....	H	----
Torture Toys (1972) R.....	CC	----
Toy Look-Alike Guns (2009) PS .....	CC	4.5.73
Video Game Sites (2005) PS .....	CC	4.5.75
<u>TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION:</u>		
Funding Sources for Adult Crossing Guards (1981) R.....	CC	----
School Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Improvement (2001) R .....	CC	----
School Transportation (1981) R .....	E	----
School Transportation: Equitable Funding (2004) R .....	E	----
<u>TRUANCY (SEE ATTENDANCE, GANGS):</u>		
Before- and After-School Options for Children and Youth (2008) PS .....	P	4.5.5
Delinquency Prevention (2004) PS .....	CC	4.5.12
<u>VEHICLE SAFETY (SEE SAFETY):</u>		
<u>VIDEO (SEE MASS MEDIA):</u>		
<u>VIOLENCE AND VANDALISM:</u>		
Aid to Rape Victims and Their Families (1977) R .....	CC	----
Delinquency Prevention (2004) PS .....	CC	4.5.12
Gang Awareness (2006) PS .....	CC	4.5.34
Gangs Programs.....	CC	7.15
Inclusiveness and Diversity (1999) PS .....	M	4.5.39
Juvenile Offenders in the Justice System (2001) PS .....	CC	4.5.41
Missing and Exploited Children Programs.....	CC	7.21
Safe School Environments (2005) PS .....	CC	4.5.57

Title	Commission	Section
Status Offenders (2006) PS.....	CC	4.5.67
Strategies to Reduce School, Family and Community Violence (1995) R.....		
Threatening Phone Calls to Schools (1990) R.....	CC	----
Torture Toys (1972) R .....	CC	----
Treatment Centers for the Sexually Abused (1978) R.....	CC/H	----
Violence and Vandalism (1980) R .....	CC	----
Violence in the Home (1977) R.....	CC/P	----
Violence Prevention in Schools (1999) R.....	CC	----
<u>VOUCHERS:</u>		
Education: Opposing Vouchers, Tuition Tax Credits and Deductions as Systems of Education Aid (2008) PS.....		
Education: Support of Public Education (2004) PS.....	E	4.5.16
Tuition Tax Credits (1982) R* .....	E	4.5.18
<u>WEAPONS:</u>		
Ban on Military Assault-Type Weapons (1989) R.....	CC	----
Ban on the Manufacture and Sale of Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns (1997) R.....		
Firearm Safety and Awareness (1995) R .....	CC	----
Firearm Safety Devices (1999) R .....	CC	----
Firearms and Assault Weapons (2005) PS .....	CC	4.5.32
Licensing and Registering of Handguns (2000) R.....	CC	----
Paintball Gun Control (1993) R .....	CC	----
Toy Look-Alike Guns (2009) PS .....	CC	4.5.73
Weapons on Campus (1973) R .....	CC	----
<u>YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION:</u>		
Forming a Committee to Study and/or Implement Year-Round Education (2005) G.....		
Year-Round Education (2005) PS .....	E	4.6.6
Year-Round Education (2005) PS .....	E	4.5.76

## 4.1 Local PTA Advocacy for Children and Youth

Any unit, council or district PTAs 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.

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.

For details on the responsibilities of the Legislation Chairman see "Job Description for Legislation," Chapter 10.

### 4.1.1 Study the Issues

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

- 4.2.4 Legislation Platform (general principles and legislation planks)
- 4.4 Where We Stand: Convention and Board of Managers Resolutions
- 4.5 Where We Stand: Position Statements
- 4.6 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 7.4.2). Your council or district PTA can provide assistance.

Present the results of the study to your membership. 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 the 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

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

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 the California State PTA will be reported to the local unit.

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 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 Convention Resolution Process (Convention Resolution Process 2.9).

### 4.1.2 Statewide Issues

When undertaking advocacy on a statewide issue at the local level, research the issue and know the pros and cons. If the unit, council or district is working on a specific measure, know 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 the 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 upon which the California State PTA has taken a position, the California State PTA will provide an analysis of the measure, including both pro and con arguments and resources for further study.

### 4.1.3 Communicate with Your Elected Officials

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.

Identify the most effective form of communication for individual elected officials.

To determine who your state representatives are, visit [www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html).

You may find the name of your federal elected representative by going to: [capwiz.com/npta2/home](http://capwiz.com/npta2/home).

#### 4.1.3a VISIT YOUR LEGISLATORS

Group or individual contacts are among the most effective ways to communicate with legislators. California State PTA recommends that you schedule at least one meeting per year with your State Assembly and State Senate representatives either in Sacramento or in their local offices. You may also want to meet on a regular basis with your local school board or other municipal or county representatives.

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 part of a delegation, 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 delegation 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 aides about PTA's history and position. 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.

**constituent:** Citizen residing within the district of a legislator; one of a group who elects a representative to public office; a voter in a constituency.

#### 4.1.3b WRITE LETTERS

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

Determine the message. Have sample messages available, as well as fact sheets with PTA's position on the issue. When writing 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).

When writing, you should:

- Be brief, creating separate letters for each issue or measure;
- Include bill number, author, and a brief description of the bill;
- Be specific about how the legislation would affect your school district and/or community;
- Be willing to share any expertise and explain your connection with the subject;
- Be positive and don't ask for the impossible;
- 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 the 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.

#### **National PTA Office of Governmental Relations**

1090 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20005-4905

**4.1.3c 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  
P.O. Box 942848  
Sacramento, CA 94248-0001

The Honorable (name)  
California State Assembly  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0001

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

**4.1.3d FAXES**

Faxes are a quick, effective method for making PTA’s position known in writing. Many legislative offices have publicly listed fax numbers. Refer to 4.1.3b when composing the fax.

**4.1.3e ELECTRONIC MAIL (E-MAIL)**

E-mail is another way to communicate PTA positions on legislation. Some elected representatives may not accept e-mail attachments. Check with their office about their e-mail preferences before encouraging your members to e-mail a particular representative. Refer to 4.1.3b when composing e-mail.

**4.1.3f TELEPHONE**

Phone calls are an effective communication strategy, particularly when timing is critical. That is, when an elected representative’s support or vote is needed within the next 48 hours. Following are some tips on using 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.
- Give information on the bill number and ask when action on the measure is expected.
- State that you are from the legislator’s district, and explain the PTA’s position on the issue.
- Ask how the legislator expects to vote.
- Urge the legislator to vote for the PTA’s position.

**4.1.3g TELEPHONE AND E-MAIL TREES**

PTA members may receive the California State PTA Legislative Alerts by enrolling at ptaadvocacy@aol.com.

Telephone and e-mail 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 the information to local legislation chairmen who, in turn, can reach other PTA members in their communities.

Through the use of telephone and e-mail trees, within a few hours of a legislative alert or call to action, literally hundreds of letters, post cards, phone calls, faxes or e-mail 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 the legislators to feel the impact of the PTA lobby within hours.

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

*Establishing a Telephone or E-mail Tree*

List the names and phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses of all those PTA members within your local area willing to act.

Establish the calling sequence. Select “lead” callers.

“Lead” caller should make no more than five calls, but may send unlimited e-mails.

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

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

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

Invite telephone tree volunteers to a workshop to build individual confidence and enthusiasm. Distribute a copy of the entire telephone tree for all involved. Duplicate and distribute legislation materials from the California State PTA, the council (if in council) and district PTA.

In the case of an e-mail tree, the legislation chairman can send one message to the entire list and members can forward it on accordingly.

*Tips on Effective Telephone or E-mail Trees*

Have alternate callers, in case someone is unavailable.

Have a system to check the effectiveness of telephone or e-mail tree. Is the tree functioning efficiently? Are there problems to adjust?

Make your calls or send e-mails to legislators before 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.

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Write down the message the leader is giving callers. 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 activating a telephone tree, the PTA unit has dramatically increased the number of contacts with legislators. It is important they hear from PTA—legislators need to be reminded about priority issues.

Update the addresses on a group e-mail frequently.

#### **4.1.3h FOLLOW-UP**

Following action on a bill, send the legislator a thank you note if the vote or action was favorable, or a polite note expressing 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.

#### **4.1.4 Public Appearances**

Another method of bringing attention to issues of concern to your local unit, council or district PTA is to schedule public appearances. Appropriate forums may include regular meetings of the local school board, chamber of commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis or other service club. 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.

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

### **4.2.1 PTA Legislation Team**

The legislation team includes the director of legislation and legislative advocates who specialize in specific issues regarding education, parent involvement, community concerns, and health, as these affect children and youth. PTA has no paid staff for activities on legislation. All members of the 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 tax bills and all ballot measures.

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. Selected bills are sent to members of the Legislation Action Committee for detailed study.

The Legislation Action Committee meets three to four 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 on the bills and positions adopted. It is distributed to all members of the California State PTA Board of Managers, California State PTA Advisory Board Members, to district PTA legislation chairmen, district PTA offices, to members of the California State Legislature, and to councils and units who request the reports.

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 organizations of the California State PTA.

### **4.2.2 Legislation Program**

The PTA membership, through the organization'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 organization. This includes all action on state legislation and state ballot measures.

#### **4.2.2a SPECIFIC PTA LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES**

- 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 PTA position, statements and resolutions.
- 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.

The nonpartisan policy of the PTA is a requirement of federal law as a condition of PTA's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. The nonpartisan policy permits action on issues. PTA supports or opposes issues but never candidates or parties (Nonpartisan Policy 1.3.3).

PTA may not devote more than an insubstantial part of its activities and budget to influence legislation.

#### 4.2.2b 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 Legislative Platform, California State PTA Position Statements, and California State PTA and National PTA convention resolutions. The National PTA and California State PTA, as advocates for children and youth, carry out an active, effective legislation program.

#### 4.2.2c 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 the 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 the 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 organization 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:

- The Legislation Platform principles and planks;
- Convention resolutions adopted by California State PTA convention delegates;
- Position statements and resolutions adopted by the California State PTA Board of Managers;
- National PTA convention resolutions;
- National PTA Board of Directors position statements and legislative directives;
- Previous PTA action on the same issue; and
- Purposes of the PTA.

#### 4.2.3 California State PTA Legislative Bill Positions

For legislative bills that have significant impact on children and youth and fall within the framework of the legislation platform, priorities, and current PTA positions,

the 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 change the bill. If the bill is amended so that it no longer is objectionable, PTA would 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, the California State PTA will work to secure its passage.

**Seek Amendments:** Legislation that addresses an important PTA issue, but the bill is not complete, or the author intends to work further on the bill through amendments. Legislation advocate will work with the author and with allied organizations to secure appropriate changes or to help shape the bill. Future amendments could result in the PTA taking an active support or oppose position.

**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 the California State PTA.

**Watch:** Legislation that could be important, but the PTA does not take an active position of support or oppose. The California State PTA follows these bills and includes them on any legislation reports. Future amendments to the bills 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 indicated. If the content is no longer within the scope of PTA action on legislation, the PTA position is dropped.

#### 4.2.3a POSITIONS ON STATE INITIATIVES AND PROPOSITIONS

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

**legislative advocate:** an individual who presents the views of a group or organization to legislators.

**Platform:** establishes authority and direction for deciding "what" measures PTA should select for action on legislation.

**Policies:** guide "how" action on legislation may be taken by PTA.

**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, the California State PTA has chosen to neither support nor oppose this particular initiative. Will not support or oppose passage of the initiative.

If the California State PTA has decided to take no position on a qualified statewide ballot measure, unit, council and district PTAs may take action locally, provided there is a vote of the general membership, and the vote is recorded in the minutes (California State Legislation Policies, and Procedures No. 10, 4.2.5j).

#### 4.2.4 Legislation Platform

Presented to convention delegates  
for adoption in even numbered years.

*Adopted May 2008*

##### 4.2.4a 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 upon 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.

##### 4.2.4b 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. Coordination and planning by all agencies with clear definition of responsibility at each level of government.
4. 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.
5. Adherence to strict ethical practices in political campaigns and at all levels of government.
6. Strong and broadly-based tax structures at state and local levels.

7. 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.

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

##### 4.2.4c LEGISLATION PLANKS

The 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.
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 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.

#### 4.2.5 California State PTA Legislation Policies and Procedures

Adopted May 2009

Presented to convention delegates for adoption in odd-numbered years.  
Policies are italicized;  
procedures are not italicized.

Procedures adopted by California State PTA Board of Managers.

##### 4.2.5a POLICY 1

*The State Board of Managers of the California State PTA is responsible for taking action on state legislation, 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, parent involvement, and one member each of the communications and leadership services commissions.

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 in response

to California State PTA Legislation Alerts and calls for action.

Unit, council and district PTAs are urged to communicate to the State Board of Managers their studies, opinions, and recommendations at any time.

##### 4.2.5b POLICY 2

*Legislative measures selected for action by the State Board of Managers must be of statewide significance, and must fit within the Purposes of the PTA and within the framework of the Legislation Platform adopted by the convention delegates.*

A measure is considered to be a proposed bill in the Legislature, a proposed statewide initiative petition, or a proposition which 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 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.

##### 4.2.5c POLICY 3

*Any position on legislation adopted by the California State PTA Board of Managers remains in effect until the subject has been reviewed and new action taken according to adopted procedures.*

A change in position is necessary at times when a bill has been amended. If this occurs at a time when the legislation action committee is not scheduled to meet, the advocate working the bill will contact the subject matter commission chairman, the director of legislation, and the president to request a "change in position."

Bills requiring immediate action between meetings of the California State PTA Board of Managers or legislation action committee shall be considered by a task force consisting of the California State PTA president, president-elect, director of legislation, and appropriate subject matter vice president(s) in consultation with the advocate(s) who will carry the bill. Any such action must be ratified at the next regular meeting of the legislation action committee.

A position is considered a continuing position if it is clearly affirmed by prior California State PTA action on legislation convention resolutions, current position statements as printed in the *California State PTA Toolkit* (Where We Stand: Position Statements 4.5) or National PTA resolutions and positions consistent with current California State PTA positions.

A continuing position with respect to proposed legislation may be communicated to legislators, legislative committees and other concerned agencies and organizations by person(s) so authorized by the California State PTA Board of Managers, provided that:

- The appropriate commission chairman and director of legislation concur in such a position; and
- Action taken under this procedure will be reported (a) immediately to the California State PTA president and Board of Directors, and (b) to the Board of Managers at its next meeting.

#### 4.2.5d POLICY 4

*All positions on legislation taken by the California State PTA Board of Managers shall be posted on the organization'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 information alert sent through the California State PTA Legislative Listserv, which includes 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. The PTA rationale for each position on each bill shall be included in the bill folders as a note for each bill.
- Unit, council and district PTAs of the California State PTA may access PTA positions on legislative bills, along with the rationale, on the California State PTA website.
- The position and rationale shall also be made available upon request to councils, units and the membership.

When positions are adopted on state ballot measures:

- The rationale for California State PTA Board action shall be prepared by the California State PTA Board of Managers and distributed to unit, council and district PTAs;
- The position and rationale shall be presented to the membership by the units.

#### 4.2.5e 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 the California State PTA Board of Managers is studying or has taken action, before tak-*

*ing any action locally. If the California State PTA Board of Managers has studied the measure and has made a formal decision not to take action, or has chosen not to consider the measure, then action may be taken locally if the appropriate steps are followed.*

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, should be conducted.

Before taking action, the unit, council or district PTA must take a vote at a general membership meeting and record the results in the minutes.

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

#### 4.2.5f POLICY 6

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

#### 4.2.5g POLICY 7

*Unit, council and district PTAs are encouraged to promote the adopted California State PTA position and may be requested to actively support positions taken by California State PTA. While unit, council and district PTAs are not required to work actively for any position, they may not officially oppose a stand taken by the State Board of Managers. Unit, council, and district PTAs need not vote to affirm a California State PTA position in order to take action. Expressed membership disapproval of a position on legislation should be communicated to the California State PTA Board of Managers through regular channels, with a report of the extent of and reasons for the disapproval.*

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 California State PTA position.

**4.2.5h POLICY 8**

*Any unit, council or district PTA may request that the California State PTA Board of Managers consider taking action on state legislation or proposed or qualified statewide ballot measures.*

Proposals shall indicate the source of the recommendation.

Approved proposals from units and councils first shall be presented to the district PTA for consideration.

The district PTA shall review each proposal and either promptly forward it to the California State PTA Board (with or without endorsement or comment) or shall return it promptly to the originating body with full explanation of the reasons for failing to forward it to the California State PTA Board.

If, after reconsidering the proposal, the unit or council votes to resubmit its recommendation to the California State PTA Board of Managers, the district PTA president or acting president must immediately forward it.

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

**4.2.5i POLICY 9**

*The California State PTA may authorize a district PTA to take action on a state legislative measure that affects only their local or regional area. The district PTA affected must consult the California State Board of Managers before taking action.*

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, and any proposed action must be consistent with previously adopted California State PTA positions.

A written communication from the district PTA stating local impact of the measure and copies of the bills must be provided by the district PTA to the director of legislation.

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, is not speaking for the California State PTA, but does have California State PTA clearance to act for the district 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 a general membership meeting.

**4.2.5j POLICY 10**

*Unit, council and district PTAs are responsible for taking action on local issues originating in school districts, cities, regions, or counties, if such action fits within the framework of the Purposes of PTA and Legislation Platform, 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.

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.

**4.2.5k POLICY 11**

*Informational material on PTA positions related to legislative issues 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).)

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 is advocacy or informational, consult the district PTA president or the appropriate school district personnel.

The school site 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 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 mate-

PTAs may not directly or indirectly participate or intervene in political campaigns on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

rial with the site administrator's written authorization for distribution.

### 4.3 Election Campaigns and the Role of the PTA

Any use of the PTA name for electoral activity requires prior authorization from the 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 1.3.3; 4.2.5i, Policy 9).

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.

#### 4.3.1 Restrictions on Endorsement of Candidates

PTAs, as tax exempt organizations, cannot support or oppose political parties or candidates, including those running for school boards and nonpartisan slates. Participation in these types of activities will endanger the organization's nonprofit status with the IRS (Nonpartisan Policy 1.3.3).

#### 4.3.2 Candidates' Forum

Since elected officials' decisions 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 the community make informed choices. All citizens should carefully evaluate each official candidate being considered. Candidate forums provide one way to provide such information. Questioning all candidates during an election campaign does not violate the National PTA nonpartisan policy (Nonpartisan Policy 1.3.3).

PTA never endorses a candidate, but does take positions on issues that affect children and youth.

No campaign literature is to be distributed inside the forum room. No buttons or other campaign promotions are to be worn.

##### 4.3.2a GETTING STARTED

Form a committee. Participation on this committee falls within the *Job Description for Legislation*.

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.

Set the date, and obtain a facility that is centrally located, if possible.

Draft invitations to candidates. Be sure to include:

- Complete information on date, time, and place;

- Rules of the forum (e.g., there will be only written questions, amount of time allowed for candidates' responses);
- Rules prohibiting campaign literature distribution at forum;
- A request for any information needed from the candidate for promotion of the forum, e.g., biography and candidates' questionnaire;
- Name, address, and telephone number of person to contact to confirm acceptance or to ask for further information; and
- Due date for the candidate to respond.

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.

##### 4.3.2b PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS

Provide adequate seating and accessibility for attendees.

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.

Provide an adequate sound system with microphones available to rotate between the candidates, with a separate microphone for the moderator.

Provide tables for any refreshments and for any literature pertaining to the forum, such as agendas, programs, and packets of candidates' biographies and questionnaire responses.

Follow facility use permit regulations concerning distribution of campaign literature.

Provide a table for question screeners and a podium/lectern for the moderator. Provide the moderator with seating to sit on while candidates are speaking.

##### 4.3.2c VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

Arrange for the following:

Greeters for both candidates and attendees.

Hospitality.

**Moderator** – try to secure a moderator residing outside of the voting area or consider requesting a representative of the local League of Women Voters.

**Screeners of questions** – Enlist one community member, one PTA representative with no personal ties to any candidate, and one other person from the co-sponsoring

PTAs may not devote more than an insubstantial part of its activities and budget to influence legislation.

organization or from the community to screen questions from the audience.

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

**Person to open the forum and lead the Pledge of Allegiance** – may be the moderator or president of the sponsoring organization(s).

People to hand out blank index cards, pick up questions and deliver them to the screeners.

**Publicity** – articles for the newspaper, radio announcements, cable announcements, flyers for PTA newsletters, etc.

#### 4.3.2d THE FORUM

Provide blank index cards as attendees enter on which to write questions for the candidates. Each index card should be used for only one question and should indicate to whom the question is directed. A question may be directed to one or all candidates.

Begin with Pledge of Allegiance, welcome and a reading of the nonpartisan policies of the sponsoring groups.

Moderator should go over the rules:

- Each candidate may have a one- to two-minute opening speech and a one- to two-minute closing speech.
- All questions will be in writing.
- All questions will be screened for appropriateness.
- If a question is directed to a specific candidate, he or she will have two minutes to respond. All other candidates may have one minute to respond, if they so desire.
- If a question is directed to all candidates, each candidate will have one minute to respond. (The moderator should rotate the order in which he or she calls on the candidates.)

Timers should hold up signs to signal speakers:

- Green: start
- Yellow: 30 seconds left
- Red: stop

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.

Begin forum. While candidates are giving their opening statements, screeners can begin sorting questions to be asked of the candidates. After the opening statements, the moderator asks the candidates the audience's screened questions.

End of forum. Moderator or other designee should close and thank everyone for attending, reminding him or her of the voting date.

#### 4.3.2e CANDIDATES' QUESTIONNAIRES

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. Any candidates not responding should be so noted in the published materials.

#### 4.3.3 School Bonds and Other Ballot Measure Campaigns

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

PTAs can be most effective by:

- Taking an active role in planning the campaign.
- Providing personnel to inform the community (speakers, etc.).
- 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, 4.2.5k).
- Making use of radio, TV, and print media, including newsletters, editorial board visits, letters to the editor, and other communication resources such as PTA e-mail and Web pages.

#### 4.3.3a LEGAL GUIDELINES FOR CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY

The California State PTA and all of its constituent organizations are classified as tax-exempt nonprofit organizations 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 organizations. 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.

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 ballot measure must file a report with the State of

**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.

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California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), if its total campaign expenditures (including both monetary and in-kind contributions) reach \$1000 or more. 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 the California reporting laws might affect the PTA.

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 or devote more than an insubstantial part of its activity and expenditures to influence the outcome of ballot measures and other legislation (School Bond and Other Ballot Measure Campaigns 4.3.3). The IRS regulations do not define "insubstantial," but it is generally interpreted to mean five percent or less of the organization's total expenditures and activities.

A current or former PTA officer/board member must not use his/her title or the name of the PTA to endorse a candidate even for purposes of identification in any print, electronic, or website candidate literature (e.g., campaign mailer, ballot measure, candidate stationery).

A current PTA officer/board member must not use his/her title, the name of the PTA or the trademark of PTA

- in any election venue unless authorized by a vote of the association, following a study of the issue.
- to take action in opposition to the official California State PTA position.

Although federal election regulations do not prohibit the use of organizational affiliation for identification purposes, the California State PTA sets a standard which is higher than law. Failure to comply may result in a violation of California State PTA policy.

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.

## 4.4 Where We Stand: Convention and Board of Managers\* Resolutions

Each year delegates to the California State PTA Convention take action on resolutions that have been submitted by unit, council, district PTA 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 the California State PTA.

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

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Adequate and Equitable State School Finance System (1987)	Emergency School Bus Evacuation (1973)
Admission of Minors to R-Rated Films (1981)	Encouragement of Law-Related Education (1985)
Achievement: Eliminating the Gap (2009)	Equal Access to School Improvement Program Funds (1983)
Aid to Rape Victims and Their Families (1977)	Equalized Base Revenue Limit Funding (1991)
Air Pollution (1973)	Escherichia Coli (E. Coli) (1993)
Alcohol and Tobacco Use in Youth: Education, Prevention and Intervention (2002)	Ethics in Political Campaigns (1987)
Alcohol Beverage Advertising that Targets Youth (1992)	Ethnic Representation in Curricula (1970)
Alcohol Related Driver Education (1982)	Extended Educational Services for the Handicapped (1967)
Antibiotic Resistance Awareness (2001)	Family Preservation: An Alternative to Out-Of-Home Placement (1990)
Arts Education (1998)	Financial Literacy for Youth (1999)
Attention Deficit Disorder in Children (1998)	Financing California's Public Schools (2007)
Background Checks of Ice Cream Truck Vendors (1986)	Fire Safe Cigarettes (1983)*
Ballot Propositions (initiatives) (1999)	Firearm Safety and Awareness (1995)
Ban on Drug Paraphernalia (1981)	Firearm Safety Devices (1999)
Ban on Military Assault-Type Weapons (1989)	Fireworks: Hazards to Youth (1990)
Ban on the Manufacturer and Sale of Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns (1997)	First Aid and/or Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (1987)
Bicycle Safety Education and Training (1973)	Fluoridation of California Public Water Supplies (1995)
Bicycle Safety Helmets (1991)	Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis in Schools (2004)
Breakfast in Every School (2003)	Football Safety (1975)
Breast Cancer Early Detection Awareness and Education (1988)	Foster Families (1999)
Broadcast Projections of Results on Election Day (1985)	Full Federal Funding for Services to Immigrants (1993)*
Bungalow Classroom Safety (1971)	Funding Sources for Adult Crossing Guards (1981)
California K-12 Public School Funding Crisis (1998)	Grade Retention (1991)
Children's Television Program Timing (1979)	Hazardous Waste Management (1980)
Citizenship Education (1989)*	Healthy Lifestyles for All Children (2004)
Class Size Reduction (1996)	HIV/STD Prevention Education in Our Schools (2008)
Class Size Reduction Flexibility (2005)	Homeless Families with Children (1989)
Closed Caption TV (1978)	Hot Weather Standards in the School Setting (1992)
Community Drug Abuse Prevention Programs (1970)	Immunization Awareness and Educational Programs (1975)
Comprehensive Waste Reduction in Schools (2007)	Improvement of Communications of Legislative Matters (1965)
Computer Technology in Education (1983)	Improving K-12 Mathematics Education (1998)
Control of Look-Alike Stimulants and Depressant Drugs (1982)	Increased School Nurse to Student Ratios (1997)
Creating Lifelong Readers (1998)	Increasing Counselor to Student Ratio in Schools (2000)
Credential Requirement: Parent/Family Involvement Component (1993)	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Underfunding (2007)
Credentialed School Nurses (2005)	Indoor Air Quality in Schools (2007)
Delivery of Unsolicited and Hazardous Products (1971)	Internet Access for California Classrooms (2000)
Desegregation and Neighborhood Schools (1979)	Juvenile Justice Reform – A Priority (1983)
Developmentally – Appropriate Physical Education (1999)	Learning Disabilities and Learning Disabilities in Gifted Children (2000)
Disaster Preparedness (1986)	Licensing and Registering of Handguns (2000)
Drug Abuse Program Funding – Penalty Assessment (1980)	Limiting Concurrent Sales of Gasoline and Alcohol and the Proliferation of Outlets (1985)
Drug Advertising (1970)	Literacy Education (1989)
Duplicate Emergency Forms at Athletic Events (1974)	Local School Parcel Tax Measure Threshold Reduction (2008)
Early Childhood Development and Education (2000)	Location of Toxic/Hazardous Materials Sites (1985)
Education: A 21st Century Vision (2005)	Longitudinal Integrated Statewide Data System (2008)
Education of Health Hazards in the Use of Anabolic Steroids (1989)	Lowering the 2/3 Vote Requirement on School and Library Bonds (1999)
Educational Funding Crisis (1981)	Lowering the Vote Requirement in the California State Budget Process (2009)
Educational Technology Funding (1995)	Make Children First (1992)
Educational Testing and Test Scores (1971)	Mandatory Use of Motorcycle Safety Helmets (1974)
Educationally Handicapped Children (1972)	
Electro-Magnetic Fields (1994)	

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Measles (Rubeola) Vaccinations (1990)  
 Mental Illness: Treatment and Support (1999)  
 Minimum Instructional Time (1983)  
 Mitigating Earthquake Hazards in Public Schools (1989)  
 Nonsuspension of Proposition 98 (1991)  
 Nutrition Education (1991)  
 Nutrition Education for Adults (1978)  
 Online Safeguards for Internet Use by Children and Youth (1997)  
 Opposition to Televised Commercials in California Classrooms (1990)\*  
 Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness (1999)  
 Paintball Gun Control (1993)  
 Parent/Community Action for Effective Schools (1993)  
 Pedestrian Safety Education (1990)  
 Pesticides (1972)  
 Playground Equipment Safety Standards (1996)  
 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)  
 Quality of Life Portrayed on Television (1979)  
 Rating of PG (Parental Guidance) Films, The (1979)  
 Reduction of Student:Teacher Workload (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)  
 Responsibility of the Legislature for the Financing of Public Education, The (1982)\*  
 Safe Routes to School for All Children (2008)  
 Safety Helmets for Scooter, Skate-board and Skate Users Under the Age of 18 (2001)  
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 Save Our Kids (1983)  
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 School Construction Funding (1986)  
 School Desegregation Through Housing Integration Incentives (1982)  
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 School Support Program (1976)  
 School Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Improvement (2001)  
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 Scoliosis Screening (1980)  
 Seat Belt and Child Restraint Usage (1983)  
 Seat Belts: Rear Shoulder/Lap Safety Belts in Passenger/Multipurpose Passenger Vehicles (1989)  
 Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility Awareness (1991)  
 Smoking and Health (1964)  
 Social Host Accountability and Underage Drinking (2009)  
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 State Government Responsibility for a Rational Budget Process (1992)\*  
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 Strategies to Reduce School, Family and Community Violence (1995)  
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 TB Exams for Volunteers (1989)  
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 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)

## 4.5 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 the 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 convention resolution and no board position may be in conflict with a convention resolution.

Statements are reviewed every five years to revise, reaffirm 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.

### 4.5.1 Arts in Education

*Adopted March 1985 – Revised March 2004  
Education Commission*

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

The California State 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.

The 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.

### 4.5.2 Assessment (Statewide)

*Adopted July 1994 – Revised March 2009  
Education Commission*

The California State PTA believes assessment must be an integral part of the instructional process and is essential to teaching and learning. 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.

The 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.

To obtain an accurate assessment to facilitate the improvement of teaching and student performance, standards must be determined and clearly communicated to administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Content and performance standards should be developed with input from parents and the community. Content standards should reflect knowledge and skills in specific subject areas of the curriculum frameworks. Performance standards must indicate the level of mastery of knowledge and skills.

The California State PTA affirms that performance standards should reflect a curriculum that engages students to develop 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 the skills to be successful in a global economy.

An effective statewide assessment program should provide strategies for monitoring the consequences of assessments to endure beneficial impact on teaching and learning, include assessment instruments that have

been field tested and provide scores that are valid and reliable. It should be integrated, longitudinal and comprehensive and be designed to:

- Provide formative assessments that produce data that can inform instructional practices at the classroom level;
- Make key data regarding school resource allocation and student performance available and understandable to parents and community members in a timely manner; and
- Meet the requirements for reporting a growth model to the federal government.

See issue-related guideline: Assessment and Testing (4.6.1).

#### 4.5.3 Assistance to Families in Need

*Adopted February 1998 – Revised January 2004  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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. The 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.

The California State PTA supports government assistance programs intended to help families survive a temporary crisis and protect children from the extreme effects of poverty. The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.4 Basic Education

*Adopted May 1979 – Revised March 2004  
Education Commission*

The 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 fundamen-

tal 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.

The 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.5 Before- and After-School Options for Children and Youth

*Adopted March 2002 – Revised July 2008  
Parent Involvement Commission*

The 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 also reduce truancy and juvenile crime.

The 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.

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

##### *Program Design*

- Programs are academically focused and combine an array of enrichment, cultural and recreational activities.
- Programs are developmentally and culturally appropriate for the children they serve.
- Programs for middle and high school students include career development and life skills training.
- Programs will provide opportunities for children and youth to develop positive relationships with peers and adults.
- Health and wellness are supported through nutritional snacks, exercise programs and prevention information.
- Adequate funding and resources are available.

##### *Facilities and Environment*

- School-based programs are preferred; coordination of facilities and equipment between school and program sites is always encouraged.
- Programs comply with relevant health and safety regulations.
- Indoor and outdoor space is safe and sufficient for a diversity of activities.
- Age appropriate equipment and materials for enhancing learning are provided to all who wish to participate.
- Reasonable accommodations to make the program accessible to students with disabilities are made. This may include providing a private location or specialized medical training for the handling of a student's personal needs.

##### *Partnerships*

- Parents, schools and community organizations are key stakeholders in the collaboration that is responsible for planning, outreach and evaluation.
- Coordination between the school site staff and program staff enhances the academic components of the program by linking the school day and after-school curriculum.
- Family involvement in planning is encouraged to ensure sustained youth participation and assure that the needs of each participant are met.
- Parent and community volunteers are an integral part of the program.
- Children and youth are actively involved in community programs and engaged in community service.

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### *Staffing*

- Staff-to-participant ratios are adequate to create positive relationships and mentoring opportunities between staff and participants.
- Staff members have appropriate qualifications including the ability to provide tutoring and homework assistance in accordance with the educational component of the program.
- Staff development is appropriate to program responsibilities and is provided on an ongoing basis.
- Staff members are adequately compensated.
- Job performance is evaluated on a regular basis.

### *Program Management*

- Program management implements clear short- and long-term goals developed by the collaboration of key stakeholders.
- Relevant policies and procedures are developed and implemented.
- Fiscal oversight and sustainability are maintained.
- Programs are continuously evaluated for effectiveness through the use of multiple measures and result in necessary program modifications.

## **4.5.6 Character Education**

*Adopted 1968 – Reaffirmed March 2008  
Education Commission*

The 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, 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 for all individuals and an understanding of religious and cultural diversity;
- 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.

## **4.5.7 Charter Schools**

*Adopted March 2003 – Revised January 2007  
Education Commission*

The 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 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 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.

#### 4.5.8 Child Abuse

*Adopted March 1989 – Revised October 2006  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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.

The 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 (to include 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;
- Team building workshops so active members in the community can get acquainted with each other;
- Adequate funding for treatment centers and temporary shelters; and
- Anonymous tip lines established and advertised for safe public reporting.

#### 4.5.9 Child Care

*Adopted March 1989 – Revised March 2005  
Community Concerns and Parent Involvement  
Commissions*

The 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.

The 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 parent involvement 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.10 Child Victims/Witnesses Rights

*Adopted May 1986 – Revised March 2004  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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;
- Allowing Out of Court Statements, videotaped statements and/or depositions to be admitted as evidence;
- Allowing closed-circuit testimony, thereby ensuring that a child is protected from direct confrontation with the accused;
- Permitting special methods of questioning of the child witness (requiring attorneys to remain seated during questioning, allowing the judge to question the witness, limiting the time allowed for testimony); and
- Altering the courtroom setting to make it easier for the child to testify.

#### 4.5.11 Credentialed School Personnel

*Adopted March 1984 – Revised March 2004  
Education Commission*

The California State PTA believes all students shall have access to well prepared and highly effective teachers, certified staff and administrators in the public schools of California. PTA supports high standards for all credentialed 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 adequate 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 that are representative of 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 credentialed 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 credentialed 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 credentialed school personnel;
- Appropriate staff development for all credentialed 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.

#### 4.5.12 Delinquency Prevention

*Adopted March 1974 – Revised March 2004  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.13 Education of English Language Learners<sup>†</sup>

*Adopted November 1985 – Revised July 2004  
Education Commission*

The 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.

The 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 financial resources must be provided to districts for students to achieve proficiency;
- Local school districts should evaluate their language acquisition programs regularly and report findings to 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 is available to parents so they can make informed decisions and be effective partners in their children's education.

<sup>†</sup> See related position statements: Education: Categorical Programs, Encroachment: Effect on Public Education.

#### 4.5.14 Education: Categorical Programs<sup>†</sup>

*Adopted March 1993 – Revised January 2005  
Education Commission*

The California State PTA supports the development and implementation of categorical programs\* to meet the educational needs of all students, including students with special needs such as physical and learning disabilities, limited English proficiency, and economic disadvantages, and gifted and talented children and youth. PTA believes this can be accomplished by the use of restricted categorical funding streams that meet specific education/instructional goals. PTA further believes the legislature and the California Department of Education must establish clear guidelines and accountability standards for categorical programs. To ensure that the focus on student learning is maintained, laws and regulations for categorical funding school include:

- Clear fiscal and program accountability measures, which build on the state's existing accountability system and ensure that funding is expended for the intended purposes and outcomes established for each categorical program;
- Fiscal accountability standards to ensure that services to the category of students generating the categorical funds are safeguarded;
- Parental information guidelines that ensure parents/guardians are informed of program options and are included in the decision-making process regarding the educational needs of their children;
- Periodic review of the effectiveness and need of each categorical program.

PTA also supports flexibility in funding, often referred to as block grants,\*\* based on measurable, enhanced student learning. However, PTA believes that stringent guidelines and accountability standards must be established for any system granting program flexibility to schools and school districts. PTA would oppose block grant proposals that eliminate the targeted purpose of categorical programs created to address specific needs not being met at the state and local level. In order to ensure that student needs continue to be met, guidelines for establishing block grants should include:

- The grouping of programs that incorporate similar characteristics or serve similar groups of students;
- Recognition that students with special needs, such as disabled or disadvantaged children need additional resources to meet state standards for student achievement;
- Fiscal and program accountability standards that ensure funds are spent for the purposes and outcomes intended for the programs within the block grant;
- Sufficient planning time to provide for the transition from individual categorical program delivery to a block grant system, including time to inform parents/guardians of program changes and to include them in any decisions that affect the education of their children.

\*The term “categorical program” is not defined in state law, but generally refers to a funding program that conditions the receipt of funds on a “category” of expense including, but not limited to, such programs as special education, staff development, instructional materials, and class size reduction.

\*\*The definition of “block grant” is not defined in state law, but usually refers to funds that were once categorical, but have been “decategorized” so funds can be used at the discretion of the receiving school or school district.

† See related position statement: Encroachment: Effect on Public Education.

#### 4.5.15 Education: Higher Education

*Adopted April 2005  
Education Commission*

The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

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

*Adopted November 1991 – Revised July 2008  
Education Commission*

The California State PTA opposes any education voucher proposal that would divert public funds to private schools. The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

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#### **4.5.17 Education: Parental Choice in Public Schools**

*Adopted January 1989 – Revised January 2004  
Education Commission*

The 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. The 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 the 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.

#### **4.5.18 Education: Support of Public Education**

*Adopted October 1991 – Revised March 2004  
Education Commission*

PTA supports and encourages excellence in public education and has since its founding in 1897. The 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.

The 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.

The California State PTA supports strong parent involvement 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.

The 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.

The 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, the California State PTA believes that parent(s) and employee organization(s) rights and responsibilities must be exercised. They should work 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;
- Standards governing school curricula, personnel and student performance provide access to equal opportunities; and
- 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.

Adapted from the National PTA Board of Directors Statement, Support of Public Education.

**4.5.19 Education: The Early Years, Ages 3 To 6**

*Adopted March 1988 – Revised March 2004  
Education Commission*

The 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.

The California State PTA believes that all children ages three to six should have the opportunity to experience learning that is developmentally appropriate. There are certain components that are essential to any 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 parent involvement 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 should be prepared to meet all students' needs as they enter kindergarten by collaborating with pre-school programs and parent/guardians in developing transition plans.

The California State PTA recognizes on-going fiscal constraints on public education K-12. 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.

**4.5.20 Education: The Elementary Years, Ages 6 to 10**

*Adopted April 1990 – Revised July 2008  
Education Commission*

The 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.

The 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 all students meet or exceed grade-level academic content standards. Components of a productive learning environment include, but are not limited to:

- 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 academic content 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; and
- Parent involvement 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.

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

*Adopted January 1989 – Revised January 2009  
Education Commission*

The 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.

The California State PTA believes that schools for the middle grades must:

- Provide an environment for successful transition from elementary to middle grades to high school by acknowledging that the personal developmental needs of adolescent students must be addressed in order to open the way for academic achievement;
- 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) who
  - Are committed to working with middle grade students;
  - Are qualified to teach young adolescents and who have been specially prepared for assignments to the middle grades;
  - Make decisions on instructional programs that enhance the intellectual and emotional development of all students.

- A variety of staff development options to enable teachers to gain the skills to use those teaching strategies that have proven effective with students of this age group;
  - A comprehensive and flexible guidance/counseling plan to pursue 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 that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potentials.

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

*Adopted April 1991 – Revised January 2009  
Education Commission*

The 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.

The California State PTA believes parent involvement 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 the California State PTA supports a strong parent involvement 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 parent-hood, 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<sup>†</sup>;
- 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.

<sup>†</sup>See related position statement: School-to-Career Technical Education (4.5.63).

#### 4.5.23 Encroachment: Effect on Public Education<sup>†</sup>

*Adopted March 1983 – Revised January 2005  
Education Commission*

The California State PTA believes it is essential to appropriate adequate resources to fully fund all mandated programs and services such as special education. 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. This encroachment diminishes the funding available for programs supported by the district's general fund and, consequently, adversely affects the ability of school districts to provide a quality education for all students.

<sup>†</sup>See related position statements: Education: Categorical Programs (4.5.14); Education of English Language Learners (4.5.13); and Special Education (4.5.65).

#### 4.5.24 Energy Conservation

*Adopted May 1981 – Reaffirmed July 2006  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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.

The California State PTA believes:

- Alternative sources of energy should be encouraged. PTAs at all levels should promote public awareness programs to keep its 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.

#### **4.5.25 Energy Drink and Coffee Beverage Awareness**

*Adopted January 2009  
Health Commission*

The 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. 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.

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.

The 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.

#### **4.5.26 Environmental Health and Environmental Education**

*Adopted March 2007  
Health Commission*

The 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.

The 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.

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.

PTAs are urged to consider the precautionary principle that states that in the absence of proof that something is safe, it is better to err on the side of caution and avoid exposure.

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.

#### **4.5.27 Equal Rights**

*Adopted 1983 – Reaffirmed January 2009  
Legislation Committee*

The California State PTA believes all children and youth should have equal opportunities to develop and reach their maximum potential. The 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, the California State PTA supports equal rights for all.

#### 4.5.28 Fair Housing

*Adopted May 1981 – Reaffirmed July 2006  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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 which 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 which 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.

#### 4.5.29 Family Planning

*Adopted January 1966 – Reaffirmed October 2008  
Parent Involvement Commission*

The 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.

In cooperating with community programs for family planning, PTA expresses its concern for maternal and child health and responsible parenthood necessary for the creation of a secure family atmosphere.

#### 4.5.30 Family Responsibility and Accountability

*Adopted March 1989 – Reaffirmed July 2008  
Parent Involvement Commission*

The 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.31 Family Services

*Adopted May 1966 – Reaffirmed July 2006  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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.

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

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#### 4.5.32 Firearms and Assault Weapons

*Adopted July 1990 – Revised March 2005  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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. The 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 child-proof 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.

The California State PTA further supports:

- Education programs that stress the importance of firearm safety and awareness, including the risks of unsecured firearms in the home, and in the use and availability of firearm safety devices, including trigger locks;
- 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.

#### 4.5.33 Freedom to Learn

*Adopted January 1966 – Revised April 2005  
Education Commission*

In a free society, public schools, universities, colleges and libraries exist, in part, for the development and exchange of ideas. The 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.34 Gang Awareness

*Adopted May 1989 – Revised October 2006  
Community Concerns Commission*

The California State PTA recognizes the harmful impact of gangs on our children and youth. Gang participation is increasing at an alarming rate in California.

Throughout California, gang members recruit, threaten, harass, and coerce children into joining gangs. Gangs usually cause children to avoid family members, friends, school and extra-curricular activities, and membership leads to behavioral changes. Children and youth who join gangs often become involved in criminal activities.

Education is the first and most important step in awareness of gangs and gang activities. Parents armed with such basic knowledge are better able to protect their children from gang involvement.

PTA advocates:

- Partnering with local law enforcement agencies to obtain current information regarding gangs and gang activity in the community;
- Educating parents about gangs; reasons why juveniles join, recognition of gang characteristics and sym-

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

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

*Adopted March 1992 – Reaffirmed January 2009  
Health Commission*

The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.36 Health Education

*Adopted January 1968 – Revised January 2005  
Health Commission*

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

The California State PTA also believes that the home, the school, and the community each bear some respon-

sibility 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.37 Homeless Families/Children

*Adopted July 1988 – Revised March 2005  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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.

#### 4.5.38 Human Relations†

*Adopted November 1968 – Revised March 2004  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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.

The 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 (4.5.6).

#### 4.5.39 Inclusiveness and Diversity†

*Adopted April 1991 – Revised April 2008  
Member Services 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 the 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.40 Instructional Materials

*Adopted May 1972 – Revised January 2009  
Education Commission*

The 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.

The 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;

#### 4.5.41 Juvenile Offenders in the Justice System

*Adopted March 1987 – Revised March 2001  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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).

The 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.

#### 4.5.42 Lead Poisoning

*Adopted May 1993 – Revised January 2005  
Health Commission*

The 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.

The 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<sup>†</sup> 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.

The 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;
  - Wash children’s hands often; especially after contact with anything suspected of containing lead; and
  - Keep areas around suspected lead contamination clean.

- 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.

<sup>†</sup> e.g., Azarcon, Greta, Pay-loo-ah, Alkohl or Kohl.

#### 4.5.43 Library Services

*Adopted May 1972 – Revised January 2005  
Education Commission*

The 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.

The 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.

The 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*

The 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.

The 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.<sup>†</sup>

<sup>†</sup> 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.

**4.5.44 Lottery Revenue and Public School Funding**

*Adopted January 2009  
Education Commission*

The 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 sig-

nificant 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, the 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.

**4.5.45 Mass Media and the Family**

*Adopted May 1974 – Revised May 2006  
Communications Commission*

The 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 but is not limited to motion pictures, radio, television, digital video discs, video and audio cassette tapes, compact discs and records, computer/computer disc software, internet websites, video games, books, newspapers, magazines, and other printed matter.

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.

The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.46 Mental Health

*Adopted January 1968 – Revised May 2004  
Health Commission*

The California State PTA believes that greater awareness is needed in understanding the issues concerning mental and emotional health.

The California State PTA further believes that the support of community programs, which are developed under the direction of trained professionals, present an opportunity for all citizens to become informed and educated about the care and support of those who become mentally ill and/or emotionally ill.

The California State PTA supports efforts to:

- Promote and encourage an appreciation of the dignity and individuality of all human beings;
- Provide information and education for maintaining mental and emotional health;
- Assist in developing awareness, providing information and education in the understanding of mental and emotional illness;
- Encourage cooperation and collaboration between mental health agencies and other community agen-

cies and programs to provide mental health and support services for mentally ill and/or emotionally ill individuals and their families within their own communities;

- Secure appropriate support services, educational programs and treatment facilities for mentally ill and/or emotionally ill individuals and their families in both urban and rural communities;
- Support legislation to maintain and strengthen mental health and support services for mentally ill and/or emotionally ill individuals and their families;
- Ensure that parents are fully informed of all aspects of treatment, and their options, including side effects of medications;
- Encourage positive public attitudes toward and the compassionate treatment of mentally and emotionally ill persons; and
- Support research that seeks early detection, diagnosis of and treatment for mental and emotional illness.

By engaging in these activities, PTA can help dispel apathy, misinformation, and ignorance surrounding mental and emotional illness. By supporting these actions, PTA can help assure that all individuals have the best possible opportunity to make their own unique contribution to society.

#### 4.5.47 Missing and Exploited Children

*Adopted March 1986 – Revised October 2006  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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 which would tie into the National Crime Information Center;
- The maintenance of the California Violent Crime Information Center to assist in the identification and the apprehension of persons responsible for the disappearance and exploitation of children, plus an automated computer system for response to reports of missing children;
- The establishment of the Missing and Exploited Children's Recovery Network consisting of an automated system to transmit to law enforcement agencies and cooperating news media services specific information on children, in cooperation with the National Center for Missing and Exploited 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;

- Establishment of a program to identify and locate missing children that would provide for participation, as necessary, of California public and private schools;
- 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 more stringent punishment for murderers of children and for perpetrators of serious and repeated physical, mental and sexual abuse crimes against children; and
- 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 within each school accessible to school personnel only;
- Ensuring the reintegration of long term missing children who have been located back into the school system;
- Legislation to secure the safety of the school facility;
- Legislation to require school districts to assure that any contractors and contractors' employees have passed a criminal background check before those individuals enter a school site when children are present.

#### 4.5.48 Nutrition Education

*Adopted May 1974 – Revised January 2005  
Health Commission*

The 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. The 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. The 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.49 Parenting Education and Skills Development

*Adopted May 1987 – Revised October 2008  
Parent Involvement Commission*

Extensive research shows that parent/family involvement in the lives of children has a substantial impact on their lifelong success. PTA and schools should help make parents aware of the implications of this research and help build parents' confidence in their parenting ability.

The California State PTA believes:

- The family is the basic unit of society and recognizes that there are many different family compositions and life styles;
- Parenting is one of the most challenging tasks and one for which there is often little or no preparation;

- Parents and all other adults responsible for the nurturing of children should be prepared to constructively influence the development of children in their care;
- Children do best when both parents are fully involved in parenting;
- Appropriate education and ongoing training in parenting skills for middle and high school students should be offered through parent education programs and other resources in the community.

Parenting education should include:

- Current knowledge about the physical, intellectual, and emotional aspects of child development from birth through adolescence;
- Current knowledge about recognizing, diagnosing and treating special needs, including physical disabilities, learning disabilities, and how to collaboratively support special needs children;
- Training in life skills: goal setting, decision-making, responsibility, assertiveness, and recognizing the consequences of choices;
- Roles and responsibilities necessary for a well-functioning family;
- Strategies for enhancing each family member's self-esteem;
- An understanding of parents' rights and responsibilities in their role as advocates for children in schools and society;
- Current information about the changing family.

PTA has a responsibility to:

- Offer parenting education programs/information to its members and the community at large;
- Help educators understand and appreciate the value of parent involvement;
- Encourage schools to provide parenting skills education to students;
- Promote parent participation in the planning and evaluation of parenting skills education;
- Support teacher training programs in parenting skills education;
- Collaborate with other state and local parenting programs to make parenting resources available to the maximum number of families.

Schools have a responsibility to:

- Implement research-based best practices in the area of parent involvement;
- 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;
- Build civic participation in school activities, functions, school committees and through community volunteer efforts;
- Develop parental leadership in support of student achievement and success;
- Provide additional support to parents and families in case of need.

#### 4.5.50 Physical Education (K-12)

*Adopted May 1993 – Reaffirmed January 2009  
Health Commission*

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

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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.51 Prevention and Intervention Programs

*Adopted January 1995 – Revised March 2005  
Health, Community Concerns and  
Parent Involvement Commissions*

The 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.

Recognizing that any circumstance that interferes with a child's potential to become a healthy, educated, produc-

tive citizen places that child at risk, the 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.

The 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 alcohol use;
- Provide mental health 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.

The California State PTA believes that children and youth must be given every opportunity to reach their full potential. The 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.

#### 4.5.52 Prevention of Teen Pregnancy†

*Adopted January 1998 – Revised January 2007  
Health Commission*

The 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.

The California State PTA supports Comprehensive School Health Programs that address the needs of young people in a systematic, integrated way. Appropriate and adequate Comprehensive 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.53 Public Involvement in School Governance

*Adopted January 2003 – Revised January 2009  
Legislation Commission*

The 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. The 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.

The 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

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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. The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

#### **4.5.54 Public School Employer-Employee Negotiations**

*Adopted March 1974 – Revised March 2004  
Education Commission*

The 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.

The 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.

The 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<sup>†</sup> 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<sup>††</sup>;
- 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.

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#### 4.5.54a COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

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

#### 4.5.54b 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?

#### 4.5.54c GUIDELINES FOR PTAs REGARDING PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE NEGOTIATIONS

The 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.

#### **Employer-Employee Relations Act Article 8. Public Notice**

3547. Public meetings; public records

(a) All initial proposals of exclusive representatives and of public school employers, which relate to matters within the scope of representation, shall be presented at a public meeting of the public school employer and thereafter shall be public records.

(b) Meeting and negotiating shall not take place on any proposal until a reasonable time has elapsed after the submission of the proposal to enable the public to become informed and the public has the opportunity to express itself regarding the proposal at a meeting of the public school employer.

(c) After the public has had the opportunity to express itself, the public school employer shall, at a meeting which is open to the public, adopt its initial proposal.

(d) New subjects of meeting and negotiating arising after the presentation of initial proposals shall be made public within 24 hours. If a vote is taken on such subject by the public school employer, the vote thereon by each member shall also be made public within 24 hours.

(e) The board may adopt regulations for the purpose of implementing this section, which are consistent with the intent of the section; namely that the public be informed of the issues that are being negotiated upon and have full opportunity to express their views on the issues to the public school employer, and to know of the positions of their elected representatives.

*California Government Code (as of January 1990)*

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.

**4.5.54d 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.*

The California State PTA strongly recommends that unit, council and district PTAs request their respective school 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.

The 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.

**4.5.54e 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 appropriate for PTA to invite the school district superintendent or representative, a representative of the district employee association to discuss negotiations at a PTA board association 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)

**4.5.54f 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,

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while consistently advocating positions that support a high standard of education for students in the classroom.

The 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 4.5.54g Contents of a Typical Teachers Contract and 4.5.54h GLOSSARY on collective bargaining terminology.

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.

#### 4.5.54g 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, student 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, reopens

Savings Clause: contract in effect if portion invalidated by court, Legislature

#### Management Rights

**Consultation:** topics, procedures

#### 4.5.54h 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 teachers' aides or clerical, custodial or food service employees.

\* EDUCATIONAL EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS ACT (EERA) – The process for establishing collective bargaining. Enacted in 1975 as Senate Bill 160 (Rodda), Chapter 961, Laws of 1975 and subsequent amendments.

\* 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 EERA 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-find-

ing 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

#### **4.5.54i RESOURCES**

California State PTA Vice President for Education – 916.440.1985 ext. 305

Selected Readings on California School Finance, EdSource, 520 San Antonio Road, Suite 200, Mountain View, CA 94040-1217; 650.917.9481; www.edsource.org

Pocket Guide To The Employer-Employee Relations Act (Fifth Edition, September 1997), California Public Employee Relations Program, Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-5555; 510.643.7092

County Office of Education (Office of Employee Relations)

Public Employment Relations Board (PERB)  
916.322.3198

*California State PTA Toolkit*, position statement,  
“Public School Employer-Employee Negotiations”

#### 4.5.54j PTA ACTIVITIES IN RELATION TO EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE DISPUTES

Public school employer-employee negotiations and/or 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 time, 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.).

#### 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:

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 \_\_\_\_\_ PTA, whose position is one of strict neutrality.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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.
- When in doubt regarding any activity, consult with California State PTA leaders—office telephone 916.440.1985.

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 the 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).

#### 4.5.54k 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.

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#### 4.5.55 Reduced Class Size in Grades K-3

*Adopted July 1996 – Revised March 2008  
Education Commission*

The California State PTA recognizes the importance of successful academic and personal development of children in the primary grades. The 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.

The 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
- A firm funding commitment to make reduced class size an ongoing priority.

The California State PTA recognizes the financial obligation that reducing class size places on taxpayers of the

state of California. The 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. The California State PTA further believes that K-3 class size reduction programs should be fully funded by the state.

#### 4.5.56 Responsibility of Society to the Family

*Adopted March 1978 – Revised January 2005  
Parent Involvement Commission*

The California State PTA believes:

- The family is the basic unit of society;
- The responsibility of rearing children and providing for their well-being belongs primarily to the family; and
- Programs that provide family support services should reinforce the autonomy of the family.

The California State PTA recognizes that:

- There is diversity in the size and structure of families and family beliefs;
- Insufficient knowledge about child development and the role of the parent/guardian as well as the stress of child rearing can hinder many parents/guardians 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 that will reinforce parents'/guardians' responsibility for their children; and
- In some instances, for the welfare of the child, it may become necessary to remove the child from the home environment after evaluation and due process.

The California State PTA believes that family support services should:

- Include parents/guardians in the planning and evaluation of programs and services;
- Be varied and flexible, encouraging voluntary participation;
- Be available to all families; and
- Include such programs as services to children with special needs, family counseling, education for parenthood, parent education, community health services and quality child care that reflect and respect the uniqueness of each community.

The California State PTA should encourage:

- Schools/school districts to adopt total school effort strategies for the maximum inclusion of all parents/guardians;
- Passage of legislation on national, state, and local levels that will enable communities to provide services

that assist families to fulfill their responsibilities to their children;

- Cooperation with allied agencies that provide programs to strengthen the family unit;
- School programs and employer incentives that ensure that the needs of working parents/guardians are always considered; and
- Awareness of the Family School Partnership Act of 1995 (Labor Code Section 230.8) and the Parent's Rights as outlined in chapter 864, statutes of 1998, Education Code Section 51100-51102.

#### 4.5.57 Safe School Environments

*Adopted March 1991 – Revised January 2005  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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.

The 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 safe school environment.

The 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.

#### **4.5.58 School-Based/Linked Health Centers**

*Adopted April 1987 – Revised January 2009  
Health Commission*

The 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.

#### **4.5.59 School Based Decision Making**

*Adopted March 2003 – Revised January 2009  
Education Commission*

The 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 respon-

siveness 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.

#### **4.5.60 School Bus Safety**

*Adopted March 1986 – Revised October 2006  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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 legisla-

tion 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 I<sup>†</sup> school buses built before 1977 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<sup>†</sup> and Type II<sup>††</sup> school buses;
- Inclusion of a three (3) point harness restraint per student on every new school bus purchased after January 1, 2002;
- 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). Driver seat belt required to meet federal safety standards.

†† 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.

#### 4.5.61 School Closure

*Adopted March 1980 – Reaffirmed March 2008  
Education Commission*

The California State PTA believes that while school closure is often viewed negatively, it can be an opportunity to improve the quality of education, as well as a necessity to decrease school district problems due to declining enrollment and financial restraints. 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.

#### 4.5.62 School Desegregation/Integration

*Adopted March 1978 – Revised January 2009  
Education Commission*

The California State PTA is committed to integrated public schools offering quality education<sup>†</sup> 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<sup>††</sup> and encouraging parent participation in school-sponsored activities; special efforts should be made to include parents residing outside the immediate school community.

† See related position statement: Basic Education (4.5.4).

†† Refer to Expanding PTA Membership (3.5).

#### 4.5.63 School-To-Career Technical Education

*Adopted March 1985 – Revised July 2004  
Education Commission*

The 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.

The 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.

The 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 information on workplace health/safety and child labor laws into all work related programs;
- 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.

#### 4.5.64 Services for Children of Undocumented Immigrants

*Adopted January 1994 – Reaffirmed October 2008  
Community Concerns Commission*

The California State PTA recognizes that the United States is a country of immigrants and that the resulting blend of cultures enriches our nation.

The 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.65 Special Education†

*Adopted March 1983 – Revised July 2004  
Education Commission*

The 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. The California State PTA further believes it is essential for the Legislature to appropriate adequate resources to fully fund all mandated special programs and services (4.4.23).

† See related position statements: *Education: Categorical Programs (4.5.14)*, *Encroachment: Effect on Public Education (4.5.23)*. Also see summaries of related National PTA Position Statements: *Education of Children With Disabilities—1994*; *Education for Handicapped Students—1991*; *Children with Special Needs—1989*; *Physical Education and Sports Programs for Children with Developmental Disabilities—1990*. These are found under the *Citizenship and Equality of Opportunity Section III Legislative/Advocacy of the Quick-Reference Guide from National PTA*.

†† Transition is defined as the acquisition of skills necessary to develop the most independent and productive lifestyle an individual may be capable of achieving.

#### 4.5.66 State Tax Reform

*Adopted January 1970 – Reaffirmed January 2009  
Legislation Committee*

The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

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#### 4.5.67 Status Offenders<sup>†</sup>

*Adopted March 1987 – Reaffirmed July 2006  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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 parent involvement;
- 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.

The California State PTA strongly supports the use of School Attendance Review Boards and other social agencies in dealing with problems of habitual truancy or persistent or habitual refusal to obey the reasonable and proper orders or directions of school authorities.

The 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.

The 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.

<sup>†</sup> 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 601 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code.

#### 4.5.68 Student Participation in Public Demonstrations

*Adopted July 2006  
Community Concerns Commission*

The 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.

The California State PTA believes a school's environment must provide a positive learning environment and physical safety for all students. While the 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 policy-makers;
- 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.

#### 4.5.69 Student Records

*Adopted November 1976 – Revised January 2005  
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.

The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.70 Television and Video Viewing

*Adopted January 1982 – Revised October 2008  
Communications Commission*

The California State PTA recognizes that television and video viewing are major influences in the lives of children and youth, providing them with a vast amount of easily accessible information and vicarious experiences. Videos can be found not only on television sets, but also on mobile phones, video game players, MP3 players, and other devices, and can be downloaded and watched on the Internet. Children may be not only passive viewers, but also interactive users and creators of online video content. PTA, therefore, will continue to encourage:

- To be aware of the many different ways children are accessing video content and, where appropriate, to make use of parental controls;
- To make every effort to watch television with their young children and to be aware of what older children are viewing;
- To be aware of and monitor videos (rented, downloaded, or purchased) that their children are watching; and
- To guide their children in the choice of programming and to teach their children how to evaluate what they see, hear, and create;

PTA also encourages its members:

- To monitor TV programs and video content and to communicate suggestions and concerns to television stations, networks, cable television broadcasters, sponsors and producers; and
- To acknowledge and commend programming acceptable for family viewing.

The California State PTA believes it is necessary to develop an aware viewing public of children and adults who will limit their television and video viewing to carefully selected programs, and who will be able to understand the explicit and the implicit messages in TV programs, commercials and video content. 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.

#### 4.5.71 Television Programming

*Adopted November 1978 – Reaffirmed March 2009  
Communications Commission*

The 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.

The 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, the California State PTA supports similar standards for the cable industry to voluntarily provide responsible programming for children.

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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.

#### **4.5.72 Termination of Pregnancy Due to Medical Emergency**

*Adopted November 1972 – Reaffirmed January 2009  
Health Commission*

The California State PTA believes that providing for the physical and mental well-being of the family unit is important to the quality of life. The 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, which includes termination of pregnancy in a medical emergency.

A medical emergency as related to termination of pregnancy means a condition that on the basis of the physician's good faith judgment so complicates the medical condition of a pregnant woman as to necessitate the immediate termination of her pregnancy to avert her death or for which a delay will create a serious risk of substantial and irreversible impairment of a major bodily function.†

† Definition verbatim from the Pennsylvania Statutes as upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

#### **4.5.73 Toy Look-Alike Guns**

*Adopted March 1989 – Reaffirmed January 2009  
Community Concerns Commission*

The California State PTA believes that the safety and welfare of our children depend upon securing laws that protect them, whenever possible, from death, serious accidents and injury.

The California State PTA is concerned that toy guns have been manufactured to look like machine guns, semi-automatics and revolvers, and alarmed that deaths have occurred when toy guns were mistaken for real guns.

California State PTA supports:

- The current ban on the manufacture and sale of look-alike toy guns and urges its members to continue to be aware of legislation that might repeal or dilute this ban.

California State PTA urges:

- Its unit, council and district PTAs to participate in public education about this ban and its importance to the safety of our children; and

- Its unit, council and district PTAs to monitor their local toy stores to determine if they are in compliance with this ban.

#### **4.5.74 Use of Pesticides In and Around Schools**

*Adopted October 1998 – Reaffirmed March 2004  
Health Commission*

The 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. Children are at an increased risk of cancer, neuro-behavioral impairment, and other health problems as a result of exposure to both active and inert ingredients in pesticides.

The California State PTA supports the use of Integrated Pest Management. 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.

The 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.

#### 4.5.75 Video Game Sites

*Adopted January 1983 – Reaffirmed January 2005  
Community Concerns Commission*

The California State PTA is concerned about the continued number of video game sites, which may have an adverse effect on many of the young people who frequent such establishments. Studies have shown that game sites are often in close proximity to schools.

In many cases there is not adequate control of access by school-age children during school hours, which compounds the problems of school absenteeism and truancy.

Where little or no supervision exists, drug selling, drug use, drinking, gambling, increased gang activities, and other such behaviors may be seen. Where there is diligent supervision and adequate lighting, however, the interest of the customers centers on the games, and the quality of play seems to be the major concern of the youthful participants.

The 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 and on alcohol and drug activity.

PTAs should study the impact of video game arcades and other establishments where games are located. They should work for the best possible solution that allows for reasonable use by children and youth, and, at the same time, does not encroach on the right of merchants to conduct business.

- 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, socio-economic, 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, extra-curricular 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.

#### 4.5.76 Year-Round Education

*Adopted March 1986 – Revised April 2005  
Education Commission*

The 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;

#### 4.5.77 Youth Involvement

*Adopted March 2005  
Student Involvement Committee*

The California State PTA recognizes the value of involving students in PTA to accomplish common goals and encourage future advocates, community leaders, and responsible adults. Students bring knowledge to PTA about education and other issues from their perspective as participants, and can provide insight to adult PTA members that helps PTAs address issues with information from different perspectives.

The California State PTA welcomes students to participate on its Board of Managers and includes student representatives on its commissions and committees.

Youth programs in schools and communities are directly impacted by budgetary and policy decisions made at the local or state level. Involving youth in policy discussion ensures that their point of view is considered in decisions that affect them.

The California State PTA believes that student contributions can build stronger and healthier communities. PTA supports 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.

## 4.6 Where We Stand: Issue-Related Guidelines

The 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 [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org).

Guidelines included in the PTA *Toolkit* in this section will automatically sunset five years after being approved unless reaffirmed or revised for another five years.

### 4.6.1 Assessment and Testing

*Adopted July 1994 – Revised April 2005  
Education Commission*

The California State PTA believes assessment must be an integral part of the instructional process without distracting from time allotted for delivery of required 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 linked to established curriculum standards provides information on the effectiveness of instructional delivery and curriculum support materials. Assessment should be used to increase the opportunities for students, rather than deny opportunities through such practices as tracking or discrimination by gender, ethnicity, culture or diversity. Assessment tied to 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.

Content and performance standards should be developed with input from parents/guardians and the community. Content standards should reflect knowledge and skills in specific subject areas of the curriculum.

Components of a sound assessment program should include:

- Formats that are culturally and racially bias-free and in a language that the student understands;
- Measurements 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;
- Providing guidance on how student learning can be increased;
- Provisions for maximum local and state control regarding all aspects of assessment;
- Guidelines for appropriate use of data;
- Strategies for monitoring the outcomes of assessments to ensure beneficial impact on teaching and learning;

- Strategies for providing remedial and other instructional support for those students who fall below school district standards and expectation;
- Providing scores that are reliable and valid; and
- Clear communication to parents/guardians and community of an accurate profile of student and school performance.

The 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.

The California State PTA affirms that assessment and testing should be used for diagnostic purposes to support student achievement and should be linked to a curriculum that engages students' intellect while providing a safe environment for students to develop problem solving, critical thinking, and reasoning skills.

### 4.6.2 Background Checks of Mobile Food Vendors

*March 1999 – Revised October 2006  
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.

#### 4.6.3 Condom Availability Through the Schools

*January 1999 – Reaffirmed January 2005  
Health*

The 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, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection leading to AIDS.

Some school districts have chosen to address this issue by making condoms available on school sites. 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 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.

If an individual needs further information, refer him or her to the California State PTA vice president for health through the California State PTA office, 916.440.1985 ext. 306.

#### 4.6.4 Dealing with Establishments That Sell Gasoline and Alcohol Concurrently

*March 1992 – Revised April 2005  
Community Concerns and Health*

Since 1987, establishments that concurrently sell gasoline and alcohol fall 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.

#### 4.6.5 Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Abuse Prevention and Awareness

*January 1999 – Revised March 2005  
Health*

The National Institute of Drug Abuse has defined “primary prevention” as “a constructive process designed to promote personal growth of the individual toward full human potential and thereby inhibit or reduce physical, mental, emotional or social disorders which result in or from the abuse of chemical substance.” This definition can serve as a measure of effective drug, alcohol, and tobacco abuse education.

The PTA believes that prevention effort must involve the home, the school, and the community seeking effective ways to address the use and abuse of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. The issues should be faced through improving family communication skills, knowledge of pri-

mary prevention education programs in the school, and developing community programs.

The 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, the PTA initiates and supports drug, alcohol, and tobacco 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, and tobacco abuse, 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, and tobacco on or near school property;
  - About teacher/staff training in effective education and primary prevention methods;
  - About 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, and tobacco prevention programs;
  - About mass media influence;
  - About the relationship between school personnel and law enforcement;
  - About the proliferation of mini-marts selling alcohol and tobacco;
  - Early intervention resources;
  - Use of 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 Agency, on facts and statistics regarding the issue;
- 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, and tobacco 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, and tobacco abuse;
- Well-established drug, alcohol, and tobacco abuse agencies, many of which have a variety of parent communications and abuse information groups;
- Allied agencies providing drug, alcohol, and tobacco 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:

- 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;
- Alternatives to the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco that are attuned to community involvement as well as school environment;
- Work experience programs, career education, family and parent involvement;
- Family programs which offer communication skills, problem solving, counseling and support groups;

- 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;
- Certificates of commendation to community members and agencies that give exemplary service in the area of awareness and prevention;
- School climate assessment programs designed to change negative school environment and attitudes as well as curriculum;
- Formation of 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.

#### 4.6.6 Forming a Committee to Study and/or Implement Year-Round Education

*January 1999 – Revised April 2005  
Education*

The California State PTA acknowledges the concern parents have when school districts find it necessary to change from the traditional September-to-June school year. Whether the decision is for educational reasons or due to severe overcrowding of available facilities, parent and community concerns should be addressed through the work of a study committee appointed by the local school governing board. PTAs in the affected schools should take the lead in ensuring that a representative study committee is appointed and that the study agenda includes the potential impact on the total community. If the decision is to change to a year-round calendar, the implementation task force should structure the agenda to answer all concerns expressed by students, parents and the broader community.

I. The Study Committee should include representatives from:

- PTA(s) and all other groups with parent members.
- Students.
- Administrative, certificated and classified staff.
- Youth serving agencies.
- Public service agencies.
- Religious groups because of their religious instruction programs, summer camps and daily recreation programs.
- Faith-based groups that offer youth programs.
- Business community and youth employment agencies.
- Child care providers.

II. The study committee agenda should include, but not be limited to, the following general topics:

- A thorough understanding of the proposed year-round plan, whether it is a single- or multi-track plan and what configuration of days on/days off is being considered, the benefits and drawbacks to changing from the traditional calendar, the need for a common calendar K-12, etc.
- Visitations and interviews with current year-round participants.
- The district plan for providing all necessary student services, such as activities with other schools not on a year-round calendar, the opportunity for students to participate in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities in a multi-track system, counseling and other student support services, particularly when multiple tracks are involved, student access to both remedial and enrichment programs and, at the high school level, access to advanced placement programs (AP),

timely planning and applications for college entrance and other career options.

- The district plan for providing services to the school such as emergency repair and regular maintenance, consideration of possible air-conditioning needs, what the plans are for facility utilization in using a multi-track system, phase-in of schools if several schools or school levels are involved, and involvement in regular districtwide events and activities.
- Plans for coordinating the various community services that support families such as before- and after-school child care and preschool child care, the need for youth-serving agencies to adapt their programs to serve students with varying schedules, coordination with public and private agencies and religious groups that provide religious instruction programs, summer camps and recreation programs and the ability of students to obtain needed employment whenever their vacation schedules permit.

Throughout this discussion the quality of the instructional program and availability of the total curriculum to all students in the district must be uppermost in the minds of everyone involved. (PTA strongly recommends a public hearing process as part of the study to ensure that all constituencies in the community are given an opportunity to voice their concerns.) The assurance that qualified teachers and staff will be provided for all students regardless of calendar decisions and that all in-service/staff development activities undertaken by the district will be provided for staff at all the affected schools are considerations of prime importance.

The decision to adopt a single- or multi-track calendar should provide an implementation task force and plan that includes the following:

- Recommendations that address the issues identified by the committee in its deliberations, with substantive rationale to support the recommendations.
- Ways to inform everyone who will be affected by the new calendar and methods to resolve resistance to the decision.
- A commitment for continued involvement of the school community as the plan is implemented and necessary changes are made; and a method for ongoing evaluation of student success.

#### 4.6.6a RESOURCES

“Year-Round Education”  
California State Department of Education  
1430 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814  
[www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/yr/guide.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/yr/guide.asp)

National Association for Year-Round Education  
6401 Linda Vista Road,  
San Diego, CA 92111  
619.292.3679, Fax 619.571.5754,  
E-mail [info@NAYRE.org](mailto:info@NAYRE.org); [www.nayre.org](http://www.nayre.org)

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## 4.6.7 Parent Involvement

*March 1992 – Revised January 2005  
Parent Involvement*

Parent Involvement: Individual and Organizational Rights and Responsibilities in the Development of Children

National PTA Position Statement  
(Adopted by the 1991-1993 California State PTA Board of Managers)

Parent involvement is the participation of parents/guardians in every facet of the education and development of children from birth to adulthood, recognizing that parents/guardians are the primary influence in children's lives.

Parent involvement takes many forms, including the parents' shared responsibilities in decisions about children's education, health and well-being, as well as the parents'/guardians' participation in organizations that reflect the community's collaborative aspirations for all children.

### *Parent's Responsibilities*

The parent/guardian, as a role model and initial teacher, has the responsibility to:

- Safeguard and nurture the physical, mental, social and spiritual education of the child;
- Provide opportunities for interaction with other children and adults;
- Lay the foundation for character development and responsible behavior;
- Lay the foundation for responsible citizenship, by instilling a knowledge of and respect for our nation's diverse cultural heritage;
- Provide a home environment that encourages and sets an example for the child's commitment to learning;
- Know, help and work as partners with teachers and school support staff, administrators, and special teachers;
- Communicate with, serve on, and participate in the selection/election of school officials (e.g., school board members, superintendents, school councils);
- Develop, through observation, a knowledge of how the child functions in the school environment.

### *Parent's Rights*

A parent/guardian has a right to:

- Clear, timely, and concise two way communication and information between home and school;
- Clear and concise information about the school and the child's grade level and developmental progress;
- Confidentiality of information about the child;

- Clear understanding of the processes to gain access to the appropriate school officials, to participate in decisions that are made and to appeal matters pertaining to the child and the appeal process;
- Promote inclusiveness and sensitivity to language;
- Expect a sensitivity to language and cultural differences (inclusiveness);
- Be informed of disciplinary or investigative action regarding their child;
- Be aware that California Law (Chapter 864, Statutes of 1998, gives parents/guardians the legal rights to
  - **Classroom Observing:** The time and date of the visitation must be arranged in advance with the school.
  - **Teacher Conferencing:** Parents should contact the school to schedule a date and time convenient for all participants.
  - **Volunteering:** Parents should contact the school to determine the terms and conditions of this service.
  - **Student Attendance:** Be notified in a timely manner if their child is absent from school without permission.
  - **Student Testing:** Be notified of their child's performance on standardized and statewide tests, and the school's ranking on these tests.
  - **School Selection:** To request that their child be enrolled in any school in the district. The district is not compelled to grant the request.
  - **Safe School Environment:** Parents are entitled to the assurance of a safe and supportive learning environment for their child.
  - **Curriculum Materials:** Examine the curriculum materials of the class or classes in which their child is enroll.
  - **Student Academic Progress:** Be informed of their child's academic progress in school and of persons to contact if they wish more information or assistance with their child.
  - **Student Records:** Access to their child's records and to question anything they feel is inaccurate or misleading, or an invasion of privacy.
  - **Standards:** Receive information regarding the academic standards their child is expected to meet.
  - **School Rules:** Receive written notification of school rules, attendance policies, dress codes, and procedures for school visitations.
  - **Psychological Testing:** Receive information on all psychological testing recommended for their child.
  - **Councils and Committees:** Participate as a member of a parent advisory committee, school-site council, or site-based management leadership team

in accordance with established rules and regulations for membership.

- **Policy Development:** Have the opportunity to work in a mutually supportive and respectful partnership with the school to help their child succeed.
- **Beyond High School:** Be informed of college entrance requirements.

*Organizational Responsibilities*

In order to protect the education, health and well-being of the whole child, the membership of the PTA has the responsibility to:

- Ensure access to an equitable and quality education for all children equally;
- Advocate that all children have the support necessary in the home, school and in the community;
- Seek information on policies, curriculum and laws that affect all children and youth;
- Share accurate information about the school—(e.g., its goals, programs and policies)—with the membership and school community;
- Help and interact with students, teachers, administrators and community;
- Promote inclusiveness and sensitivity to language and cultural differences of the community;
- Ensure an active PTA;
- Work within the PTA, school, and community in a constructive and respectful manner of procedures and a diversity of opinion;
- Work in partnership with school professionals and parent advisory groups to determine appropriate levels of programs and services;
- Participate in decisions affecting policies, rules and regulations;
- Provide educational resources and increase opportunities for the development of parenting skills.

*Organizational Rights*

A PTA organization has the right to:

- Function as an independent, nonpartisan child advocacy group;
- Meet with appropriate school officials to discuss matters of mutual concern affecting all children and youth;
- Participate, within state law and school board policy, in the setting of the school goals and assist in the review of teaching materials and curriculum;
- Seek enactment and participate in decisions affecting policies, rules and regulations relating to all children and youth.

#### 4.6.8 Studying the Impact of Video Games

*January 1993 – Revised January 2005  
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.

The 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 communi-

ty 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;
7. 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.
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.

#### 4.6.8a RESOURCE

*California State PTA Toolkit* position statement, "Video Game Sites"

#### 4.6.9 Suicide Prevention Education and Awareness

*January 1999 – Reaffirmed January 2005  
Health and Parent Involvement*

These guidelines are to assist unit, council and district PTAs in the implementation of the resolution, "Suicide Prevention Education and Awareness."

Suicide has become the number two killer of young people in California and in many parts of the United States is the second leading cause of death, accidents being the first. During the past 20 years there has been a 300% increase in suicides in children ages 13 to 19 years.

Recognizing this alarming trend, the California State Legislature has passed legislation amending the State Education Code (Section 10200, Chapter 3, Part 7) to establish a youth suicide prevention school program. This program has been strongly endorsed by the California State PTA. The legislation outlines suicide prevention educational programs for schools, parents, and community to implement.

In addition, the California Department of Education's Health Framework for California Public Schools, adopted in 1992, 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 promoting mental and emotional health is our view of ourselves and our sense of our relationship to those around us. 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.

Unit, council, and district PTAs can join with local school officials to develop programs to achieve the following objectives outlined in both legislation and the Health Framework.

#### 1. Classroom programs:

- Present current, accurate content based on up-to-date scientific information.
- Recognize similarities and differences among students to help them see that although differences do exist, many people face similar issues and choices.
- Emphasize not just health-related information but the importance of behavior, providing students with the opportunity to learn, practice, and apply new skills.
- Make it culturally appropriate, based on awareness of cultures and background of students.
- Make the curriculum accessible, using a variety of teaching strategies, both teacher-directed and student-centered.
- Take advantage of opportunities for active learning, focusing on behaviors, choices, engagement and motivation.
- Focus on mental and emotional health throughout, factors crucial to an individual's motivation to act on health-related knowledge.
- Emphasize character development with strategies for making positive, healthy decisions.
- Focus on meaning and thinking by connecting concepts in health education and other learning and experiences.

#### 2. Non-classroom or community-based alternative programs:

- Utilize programs that encourage positive peer group interventions.
- Provide access to a 24-hour “hotline” telephone service, staffed by trained professional counselors.
- Utilize programs to collect data on youth suicide attempts.
- Utilize programs that provide parent education and training.

3. Teacher training programs:

The following guidelines have been developed to assist unit, council and district PTAs in the implementation of these program objectives:

1. Establish a broadly based study committee to assess the needs of the local community. The committee should be composed of, but not limited to, representatives from: PTA/PTSA, school administration, school guidance counselors, local mental health agencies, local medical association, local county health agency, law enforcement agencies, students.
2. Determine availability of and assess existing programs.
3. Become familiar with the demonstration programs which are mandated by California Education Code Section 10200 to provide assistance and information to other counties and boards of education to implement such a program.
4. Report findings and make recommendations for a plan to PTA/PTSA membership and, if adopted, to the appropriate school governing boards.
5. Inform the PTA/PTSA membership through meetings, newsletters and other communications of actions taken regarding the plan.
6. Assist in the implementation of the plan by providing information on existing services, providing volunteers and developing parent education services.
7. Assist in the evaluation of the plan once it has been implemented.

**4.6.9a RESOURCE**

Health Framework for California Public Schools, adopted 1992

**4.6.10 Termination of Pregnancy Due to Medical Emergency**

*Adopted 1972 – Reaffirmed January 2005  
Health*

The California State PTA is an organization concerned about all aspects of the health and well-being of children and youth. PTA understands the importance of good health to a child’s quality of life and believes that all children, youth, and pregnant women are equally entitled to appropriate, confidential, and timely health care. PTA is deeply concerned about and active in protecting the rights of minors. PTA respects and is sensitive to the rights of parents, but in all instances the well-being of children and youth is of primary importance to PTA.

PTA is concerned about all aspects of unintended teenage pregnancy. Each instance of unintended teenage pregnancy must be judged individually. The California State PTA Board of Managers Position Statement, Termination of Pregnancy Due to Medical Emergency, states:

The California State PTA believes that providing for the physical and mental well-being of the family unit is important to the quality of life. The 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, which includes termination of pregnancy in a medical emergency.

A medical emergency as related to termination of pregnancy means a condition that on the basis of the physician’s good faith judgment so complicates the medical condition of a pregnant woman as to necessitate the immediate termination of her pregnancy to avert her death or for which a delay will create a serious risk of substantial and irreversible impairment of a major bodily function.\*

\*Definition verbatim from the Pennsylvania Statutes as upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.



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