

Got Students? Got Members!

It's the beginning of another school year, and that means it's time for units to fire up their membership drives to recruit parents, teachers, and community members to join PTSA. If you're looking for new strategies to increase membership at your unit (and we all are), then why not try encouraging students to join?

All Students Are Eligible to Join!

Students of all ages are eligible to join any unit, regardless of whether it is a PTA or a PTSA. This can even include students who do not attend your unit's school (for example, students who attend schools that do not have a PTSA). Upon full payment of membership dues, students receive a membership card and have exactly the same rights and privileges that any adult member has, including the right to attend meetings, debate, and vote. There are over 6 million public school students in California alone; if each of them became a member of PTSA, our nationwide membership would more than double.

Build Student Leadership Skills!

Besides membership, what are other advantages to reaching out to students? When they are fully active in the organization, students benefit from leadership opportunities provided by PTSA and offer your organization significant insight into issues that affect them. This means that they can be the "reality check" for your unit and share with you how well you are doing in supporting them. Students are a great source for volunteers. Whether it be filling a vacant position on your board to helping put on a program, students are usually willing to contribute in exchange for experience and community service hours. Plus, when you convince students to become PTSA members, there's a good chance they will encourage their parents/guardian and other family members to join as well.

Unfortunately, some students still regard the PTSA as a fundraising group. When reaching out to students, you

need to educate them about what PTSA really is and invite them to be a part of it.

Today's middle and high school students can be a powerful addition to any PTSA unit. Teenagers are concerned about their communities, aware of social issues, and eager to be involved in implementing positive change. The PTSA at their school can be an excellent way to develop their abilities and to get involved in their communities. Although starting a campaign to recruit and involve students may seem to be a substantial task, both the students and your unit will reap many great benefits.

Student Involvement Committee



Children at the front — California State PTA recently added to the look of the new office building in Sacramento with photos of children in the front windows.

A Message from Pam Brady, President

Why testing is important...

PTA members need to carry the torch and stay focused!

State budget times are tough and we know the voices of children are heard but not always listened to, and so it is imperative that each and every PTA member continues to work together to ensure that the needs of children are met.

When California adopted the new academic standards and created a rigorous accountability system, its original intent was to provide testing information that would give parents, teachers, administrators and students the information they need to improve student achievement. Good testing allows us to know what a student has learned and what knowledge is still needed. It informs teaching so it can be directed towards what each child still needs to learn. Today, we spend too much time throwing numbers up on a chart and just comparing schools. It has become a scorecard rather than useful information to inform and target teaching practices. A good testing system can provide us with good information on why some schools are successful with students while other schools with similar student demographics are not. We need to

continue to ensure that the original intent remains at the forefront and that the information is not just used as a scorecard to rate schools but rather as a tool to provide good information and insight which ultimately targets teaching strategies and leads to greater student success.

“Good testing allows us to know what a student has learned and what knowledge is still needed.”

Each of us knows that providing a comprehensive quality education for all children will, in the long-run, increase California’s economy while also decreasing the dependency on government intervention programs. It makes good financial sense to pay up front to provide quality education that is accessible for all children. There has never been a time that our multiple local partnerships are more important. Each of us must reach out locally and create mean-

ingful partnerships within our local communities that focus on the needs of children and ways to ensure all children’s success. It is only together with a single purpose and consistent focus on children’s educational outcomes that we will be able to ensure that our academic standards are met for every child without compromising the goal of educating the whole child.

Together, we can raise our voices and ensure that our legislators and the public understand that to achieve high quality education for all children we all need to understand that optimal learning is contingent upon meeting the family’s basic fundamental needs of safety, health, and good nutrition. So, schools cannot do the job alone. It takes the “whole village to raise a child” and it is time for the California Villagers to understand that it is in the best interest of all of us to get the job done right.

everychild.onevoice.

Pam Brady, President



Deadlines

Reflections Program

January 18, 2008 – (in the California State PTA office from district PTAs) **Note:** Observe council and district PTA deadlines.

MY PTA/PTSA Award

February 1, 2008 – (applications in the California State PTA office) **Remember** to observe council and district PTA deadlines for signature – applications are available in the *California State PTA*

Toolkit and on the California State PTA website (www.capta.org/programs).

Phoebe Apperson Hearst National PTA Excellence in Education Partnership Award

February 1, 2008 – (applications from PTAs in California must be received in the California State PTA office) – applications are available on the National PTA website (www.pta.org).

Members Count!

How many members belong to your PTA? Has your PTA sent the per capita dues (for each member) through channels as specified in your bylaws? If you cannot say “yes” to the second question, you have done a great disservice to your members. Their voices will not be heard and our strength as an organization is weakened.

PTA is a national membership organization. Our members provide us with a powerful and effective advocacy voice. When we send our legislative advocates to Sacramento and to Washington D.C., their advocacy strength comes from our membership at the local level.

Is your local PTA

- A powerful voice for all children?
- A relevant resource for families and communities?
- A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child?

Parents, families and community members want to join a PTA that can say “YES!” to all the above. By joining PTA, they are adding their voice to speak on behalf of all children and youth.

Do all members in your PTA have a voice?

How strong and effective is your PTA?

It is our duty as leaders to ensure that the voice of every member is heard so that together we can make every child’s potential a reality.

National PTA Parent Survey:

The top three things parents say PTA does best

PTA

- Is effective in improving my child’s education,
- Works to make schools safer for children, and
- Has a positive impact for all children, not just my own.

Communications Commission

Deadlines

Founder’s Day is February 17... Start to plan your event now! It is a perfect time to renew dedication to the Purposes of the PTA that were defined by PTA’s founders more than a century ago. Each year in February, PTA honors the three founders as well as past and present PTA leaders.

PTA Unit Achievement Award from National PTA

March 14, 2008 – (applications must be submitted to the National PTA office) – an application was sent to each unit president in the National PTA Back to School Kit; it is also available on the National PTA website (www.pta.org).

Parcel Taxes

Proposition 13 allows local government, including school districts, to levy non ad valorem taxes (i.e., taxes not based on assessed value) if two-thirds of voters approve. Parcel tax payments are generally a flat fee on each parcel rather than on the assessed value of the property. The proceeds are almost always tied to education programs rather than construction.

A ballot proposal prepared by the district seeking parcel taxes describes the purpose for which additional revenues will be used.

From 1983 through November 2006, voters approved 211 parcel taxes in 416 elections; an additional 144 received majority vote, but not the necessary two-thirds approval. Or to look at it another way: 50% of the proposals passed by two-thirds majority; 35% failed but had a majority vote; 15% failed and had no majority vote.

In 2004-2005, 66 districts received revenues from parcel taxes. The range was a minimum of \$56 per ADA in Hayward Unified School District to a high of \$3,239 in Bolinas/Stinson Union Elementary District in Marin County. The mean among districts imposing parcel taxes was \$717 per ADA, while the median was \$484 per ADA.

Legislation Team

A Message from Paul Richman, Executive Director

What Makes PTA So Unique?

In the months since I began at California State PTA as your first executive director, a surprising number of PTA leaders have taken me aside at one point or another and said, “So, are you sure you’re ready for us? PTA’s not like any other organization.”

And, well, I have to admit: we’re not. California State PTA is definitely unique – and that’s what makes us so essential in a world filled with many other worthwhile organizations and good causes.

What is it that makes us so unique?


Our mission for one thing. It reads, in part: “To positively impact the lives of all children and families...”

It’s to the point, ambitious, powerful.

I’ve spent my entire professional life working on policy issues and programs related to children and public education. These are the issues I care deeply about. And these are the very issues PTA exists to address. These are the issues we as a society have to get right.

We all understand: today’s children and their children will determine the future. Today’s children will inspire us in our thinking and in the arts. Today’s children will advance our free and democratic principles. They’ll cure diseases that have debilitated previous generations; they’ll find ways to bring peace to troubled regions and food to starving continents. They’ll find personal happiness and fulfillment by building strong families and communities of their own.

And today’s children will accomplish all of this because we did right by them, because we did whatever was in our reach to advocate for them. Because there was a PTA alongside of them!



It didn’t take me long in this new job to uncover one of the little known secrets to success of this great organization: no one at California State PTA ever sleeps. How else to explain all of the tremendous work each of you gets done in your units, councils, districts and at the state level, while you also hold down jobs and support families and pursue dreams and do all those other things we have to do to keep our daily lives running? Our volunteers are the ones willing to walk the walk and advocate every day for children and for PTA. I’ve never met a group of leaders with such dedication.

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***“We all understand:
today’s children and their
children will determine
the future.”***
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There is so much to appreciate about California State PTA. We are unique. We are strong. But we can grow stronger. We have to realize and accept that we’ll never get to a place where we get to cross “positively impacted the lives of all children and families” off our “to-do list.” Our work is ongoing.

The challenge for us moving forward will be charting a course that maintains what is unique and strong about our organization, while at the same time making the changes we need to advance our mission even more effectively into the future.

As we embark on this next part of our journey, I hope each of you will ask the tough questions both locally and of us at State PTA. I hope you will think creatively and boldly. I hope you will honor and value all the great work that has brought PTA to this point – yet not be afraid to suggest ideas to make us even better. As the volunteer leaders who power this organization, you can help push us into the future so that we, as an organization, remain a dynamic, ongoing force on behalf of all children and families.

Paul Richman, Executive Director

Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grant

The Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grant is awarded to local PTAs for student-centered programs focused on arts education. Special consideration is given to programs that reach large numbers of students, especially students who are at risk. The grant program complements PTA's long-standing commitment to quality arts education in public schools by providing funds to local PTAs to establish or enhance school arts programs in one or more arts areas: visual arts, photography, music (including dance), and literature (including theater). A PTA unit in California was awarded one of the three grants for the 2007-2008 year: **San Juan Elementary PTA in San Juan Capistrano, CA** received \$1000 to hold after-school

workshops focusing on literature and storytelling techniques, instrumental music and composition, and dance choreography. Workshops will be led by the Orange County Performing Arts Center's Arts Teach program. Arts Teach and its instructional material incorporate activities that coincide with objectives contained in the National Standards for Arts Education and the California State Frameworks for the Visual and Performing Arts. Students will be encouraged to use what they learn in these workshops to create entries for the Reflections Program.

The 2008 Grant Program information was included in the Reflections Program packet sent to all units in the annual Service Mailing. Completed applications must be received by the National PTA office on or before May 1, 2008 for consideration. Grant recipients will be notified in early June, and grants will be distributed beginning in October 2008. All applicants will be notified of the status of their application by the end of July 2008.

Member Services Commission



Recruiting Tips

Here are some tips for recruiting students, and some helpful talking points:

- **Set up a table** at lunch with information about PTSA. Tell them about what your local unit does and what PTSA does statewide and nationwide. Be there to answer questions that students may have, and have them sign up to be members right there! If you already have some students in your PTSA, ask them to help out at the table.
- **Reach out to the school's student body.** Help educate them about PTSA, and encourage them to sign up and tell their friends. Consider adding a representative from the student body to your executive board. Collaborate with ASB/UASB leaders.
- **Publicize PTSA membership and meetings.** Have it mentioned in the school announcement, include it in your school's newsletter or weekly bulletin, or put up posters or flyers.
- **Educate parents** on the importance of involving students in PTSA, then ask them to recommend PTSA membership to their kids.
- Many high schools now require documented **community service hours** as a prerequisite for graduation. Remind students that volunteer hours with PTSA can be credited towards this requirement.
- California State PTA grants numerous **scholarships** every year to graduating seniors throughout the state. PTA/PTSA membership is one of the eligibility requirements.
- As **college applications** get more and more competitive, colleges are looking for unique traits in applications. Student participation in PTSA is something that colleges notice and pay attention to in applications.
- If there are several PTSAs in your area, organize a **student network**. Your council or district may be able to offer assistance with this. Students working together throughout a community can have a tremendous impact on issues and awareness. A network can also be a great place to foster new friendships and collaborations between students of different schools.

PTA U Provides Unique Training for Districts

More than 200 volunteer parent, student and community leaders from around California converged on the UCLA campus August 24-26 for California State PTA's premier advanced leadership training event, PTA University.

The event offered general sessions and workshops designed to help district PTA volunteer leaders strengthen their skills in leadership, engaging parents and families, financial management, communications, and advocacy. Each of the 29 PTA districts in the state sent a team to participate. These leaders take the skills they learn at PTA University back to their councils and units to help train and support an even larger network of volunteers.

"PTA University is a great way to help make sure our district PTAs have the tools they need to be successful in serving the needs of children and advancing our mission," said Pam Brady, California State PTA President. "It's truly a one-of-a-kind leadership training program."

"It's truly a one-of-a-kind leadership training program."

State PTA leaders, led by the Leadership Services Commission, planned and organized the entire event and conducted many of the training sessions. National PTA President Jan Harp Domene from Anaheim spoke to the group on the final day. Participants were housed in the campus dorms and ate their meals in the cafeteria.

"Everyone who attended PTA University put in long hours to hone their skills as volunteer leaders," said Brenda Steffen, vice president for leadership services. "We cover a great deal of material in two-and-a-half days—plus we manage to have a lot of fun and help our members from different parts of the state to make connections with and learn from each other."

California State PTA is grateful to New Dental Choice, FoundationCare and Perfect Productions for helping to sponsor this year's PTA University.

Spanish Edition of *TOOLKIT* Released

The Spanish **TOOLKIT** has been updated and is now available for purchase. Order your copy today!

Order form is available in the English **TOOLKIT** and on the California State PTA website (www.capta.org).

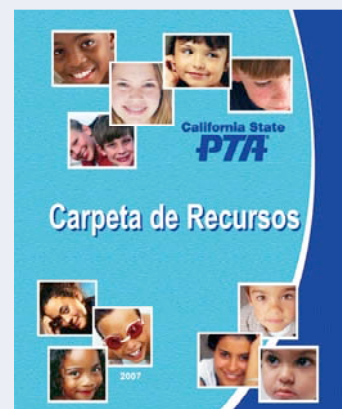
This valuable resource for the operation and management of a PTA includes:

- List of PTA materials, Due Dates, and Calendar of Events
- PTA Basics
- PTA Management
- Membership Information, including Due Dates and Award Timelines
- Advocacy Information, including Position Statements and Guidelines and Resolutions adopted by Convention Delegates
- Financial Procedures
- Communication Information
- Programs, including Scholarships information
- Bylaws of the California State PTA
- Forms
- Job Descriptions

La *Carpeta de recursos*, edición en español, se ha puesto en venta

La ***Carpeta de recursos***, edición en español, ha sido actualizada y está ahora disponible para la compra. ¡Ordene su copia hoy!

La hoja de pedido está disponible en la ***Carpeta de recursos***, edición en inglés o en el sitio web de la PTA de California (www.capta.org).



Este recurso valioso para la operación y administración de una PTA incluye:

- Listado de materiales, lista de fechas límite, y calendario de eventos
- Aspectos básicos de a PTA
- Administración de la PTA
- Afiliación, incluyendo fechas de entrega y período de tiempo para los premios
- Información sobre la defensa activa, incluyendo declaraciones de postura, lineamientos y resoluciones adoptadas por los delegados en la convención
- Procedimientos de finanzas
- Información sobre comunicaciones
- Programas, incluyendo información sobre becas
- Estatutos de la PTA de California
- Formularios
- Descripción de funciones para directivos y presidentes

2007 Convention Resolutions Implementation

When delegates vote to approve resolutions at convention each year, they establish policy and direction for PTA action on those issues. The California State PTA and its units, councils and districts all play a crucial role in implementing convention resolutions.

PTA works in many ways to do this, including further study of an issue, developing and distributing information and materials, or various advocacy activities. Last May, delegates adopted five resolutions. The text of each can be found on the California State PTA website at www.capta.org.

- **Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) in Schools**

The Health Commission of the California State PTA will be implementing this resolution during the coming year. Cory Sanfilippo, Vice President for Health, will respond to inquiries (email: health@capta.org).

- **Comprehensive Waste Reduction in Schools**

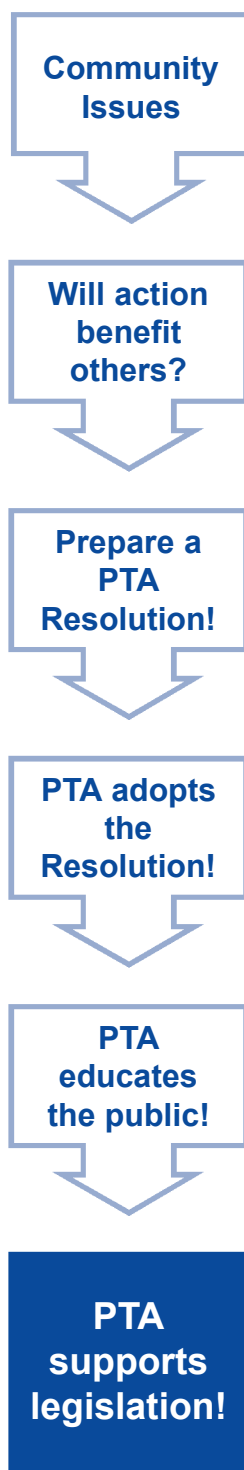
The Community Concerns Commission of the California State PTA will be implementing this resolution during the coming year. Kathy Moffat, Vice President for Community Concerns, will respond to inquiries (email: community-concerns@capta.org).

- **Public School Governance Authority**
- **Financing California's Public Schools**
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Underfunding**

The Education Commission of the California State PTA will be implementing these resolutions during the coming year. Barbara Ledterman, Vice President for Education, will respond to inquiries (email: education@capta.org).

Resolutions and Legislation

A resolution may direct the California State PTA to



support legislation or engage in other kinds of advocacy. PTA resolutions are not law — PTA does not make law. But many resolutions carry legislative intent, and PTA does work on legislation and ballot measures related to PTA issues.

By adopting a resolution, the delegates ensure that the subject of the resolution will be included in the California State PTA legislation program. The California State PTA uses the adopted resolutions for authority and direction when considering any bill or ballot measure on the subject of that resolution.

A Call to Action

Resolutions may ask PTA units, councils and districts to take action that responds to the concerns addressed. Often these actions include working with local school boards, city councils or other policymaking bodies. The California State PTA may gather information and prepare materials or guidelines to assist PTA units, councils and districts in working on a specific issue.

Articles regarding resolutions are published in *PTA in California* and *The Communicator*, as well as in special mailings and other printed or recorded materials. California State PTA advocacy actions often are linked with the efforts of PTA units, councils and districts throughout the state. Legislation Alerts may be emailed to PTA districts, councils and subscribers, and are posted on the California State PTA website: www.capta.org.

The 2007 resolutions call for action by units, councils and districts as well as by the California State PTA. Please participate in implementing these resolutions. Contact Linda Shafer, Resolutions Chairman, for further information or assistance (email: resolutions@capta.org).

Resolutions Committee



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**Be sure to check the website
for specials and new items**

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**If you are no longer a PTA president,
please forward this and all mailings
immediately to your successor.**

Articles appearing in this newsletter may be reprinted in PTA unit, council and district newsletters only. Please credit the California State PTA.

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The mission of the California State PTA is to positively impact the lives of all children and families by representing our members and empowering and supporting them with skills in advocacy, leadership and communications.

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