

## FINANCING CALIFORNIA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 2007

- WHEREAS, The California State PTA recognizes the need to determine and secure an adequate level of funding and resources for public schools that ensures a quality education for every student; and
- WHEREAS, To assure the opportunity for all students to reach their full potential, funds must be available to provide for the diverse needs of students and the differential costs to school districts; and
- WHEREAS, The California State PTA recognizes that a stable and consistent finance system and responsible fiscal planning are necessary for a quality public education; and
- WHEREAS, California business, industry and society need a well-educated citizenry to compete in a technology and information-based society and the global market; and
- WHEREAS, Funding and resources are needed to alleviate crowded classrooms, build new schools to meet the needs of a shifting population, and to modernize and repair aging school facilities; and
- WHEREAS, California continues to rank near the bottom of all the states in funding for instructional materials and in the number of teachers, counselors, school nurses, librarians, and other certificated school personnel; and
- WHEREAS, The California State PTA is a strong proponent of Proposition 98, California's constitutional guarantee of minimum state funding for the state's public schools; and
- WHEREAS, State policy makers continue to explore new methods for funding public schools; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts work to educate public policy makers, PTA members, community members, and the media about the shared responsibility in the continuing need for the necessary resources and funding for California's public school programs and facilities; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts advocate for adequate funding for every student; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts support the ongoing efforts to explore new models of public school funding to ensure a quality education for every student; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts continue to make financing our public schools, both programs and facilities, a top priority in order to ensure a quality education for every student.

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## **Background Summary**

Since 1976 the California State PTA has adopted numerous resolutions, more than a dozen in all, that address issues of adequate and stable funding for our state's public schools. PTA strongly supported the passage by voters in 1988 of Proposition 98, which established California's current constitutional guarantee of minimum funding for K-12 schools and community colleges. California State PTA Legislation Platform General Principles call for "the continued constitutional guarantee of financial support for public schools as the first claim on all state revenues in the general fund."

In spite of Proposition 98, California continues to rank near the bottom of all the states in funding for public education, including the number of teachers, administrators, and other school personnel per student. While Proposition 39 lowered the voter percentage required to pass local school facilities bond measures, the critical need for new and modernized school facilities remains. In addition, federal and state mandates for academic standards and accountability for the performance of all students have placed additional pressure on the use of limited school funds.

The current state of school finance in California is a complex system that is difficult for parents, community members, and even policy makers to understand. Differences in the ways schools are financed; from revenue limits to categorical programs, create inequities in funding for schools, for school districts, and for subgroups of students. Formulas for funding charter schools, basic aid school districts, and funding for federal programs such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have led to further conflicts, inequities and confusion, and to the adoption of numerous PTA resolutions. The goal of this resolution is to retire many of the outdated resolutions on school finance by creating a single school finance resolution that reaffirms PTA's commitment to making adequate funding for California's public schools a top priority. Finally, in 2005 delegates to the California State PTA annual convention adopted a new resolution "Education: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Vision," which addressed the components that PTA believes are necessary to a quality education. The resolution "Financing California's Public Schools" addresses the need to fund this vision.