

PTA[®] in California

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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE PTA

FALL/WINTER 2002

California State PTA Unveils Arts Mural In Los Angeles



On December 12, 2002, the California State PTA unveiled its "Restoration of the Arts" mural in a ceremony at its headquarters in downtown Los Angeles. Speaking at the occasion were President Jan Harp Domene, Vice President for Education Pam Brady, Special Projects Chairman Jo Loss, and donor David A. Legaspi, III, mural designer and artist. Tom Whaley, Director of Arts, was introduced representing the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District which provided scaffolding for the project. PTA leaders, representatives of arts organizations, civic leaders, and business and education officials also attended the unveiling.

Painted on the building exterior facing Olympic Boulevard, the 20' x 85' multi-colored panorama features children painting a mural of children and youth engaged in a variety of art activities and highlights California State PTA's *SMARTS, Bring Back the Arts* project. Muralist David A. Legaspi, III, volunteered his time to design and supervise the mural's painting by students and art supporters including PTA members, Los Angeles Councilwoman Jan Perry, Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Commissioners, and Staples Center officials.

Muralist David A. Legaspi, III, graduated from the University of St. Thomas, Philippines with a B.S. in Architecture in 1983. After working as an architect/visual designer while in military service and later as a civilian architect, Legaspi began his current career as a muralist in 1993 in

Sydney, Australia. He moved to Los Angeles in 1995 and now resides in Santa Monica. As a generous donor and supporter of the arts for youth, Legaspi's murals enhance many schools throughout the Los Angeles and Santa Monica area.

The *SMARTS, Bring Back the Arts* campaign was launched in 2000 by the California State PTA to help parents, teachers and legislators understand the importance of the arts in the lives of children. The *SMARTS* campaign has three simple messages:

- *Improve our schools: Bring Back the Arts.*
- *Help our children: Bring Back the Arts.*
- *Help our communities: Bring Back the Arts.*

"PTA has championed the inclusion of kindergarten in public schools, school lunch programs, child labor laws, and reduced class size for California schools," notes President Jan Harp Domene. "California State PTA members are now advocating for quality arts education at every school. Research has shown that the arts improve academic and personal success."

A consistent message of arts education is a priority throughout the California State PTA's many commissions and committees. In 2001 California State PTA sponsored an arts bill, AB 869 (Shelley), which would have funded critically needed arts instructional materials, equipment or services. California State PTA continues to work actively for legislation to provide resources for arts education.



From the Bylaws Committee...

PTA “Police”—Fact or Fiction?

California State PTA leadership teams often hear tales of too many rules and regulations when out in the field to present training and workshops. We also hear vague references to the “PTA Police.”

To dispel this myth once and for all, *actual* “PTA Police” do not exist. However, all officers of the California State PTA, the PTA districts and councils are expected to ensure adherence to established PTA policies and procedures.

These procedures are in place to protect the organization and its 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status granted PTA by the Internal Revenue Service and the Corporate Tax Code under which PTA operates. PTA leaders have the responsibility to assist PTA volunteers in following guidelines and requirements.

Each PTA in California is chartered by the California State PTA under the authority or umbrella of the National PTA. Certain elements under the State and National umbrella must be observed by each PTA. These elements are detailed in the *Local Bylaws for PTA/PTSA Units*. Standard bylaws also contain provisions that keep our organization within legal requirements set by government entities. As laws change and regulations are revised, California State PTA updates the standard bylaws to incorporate those changes and revisions. Each PTA should review their bylaws annually to ensure current information is being observed.

Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised contains rules for parliamentary procedures to be followed when conducting meetings to insure fairness to all involved and assist with business operations inherent to PTAs. This publication is available at bookstores or through the *PTA List of Materials*.

To view officers and leaders as “PTA Police” is to really miss the point. Their expertise in PTA policies and procedures should be seen as the best learning opportunity we have to engage in our volunteer efforts like true professionals.

Your Annual Meeting

To be in compliance with the California Corporations Code, all PTAs must designate and hold one meeting called the annual meeting. Further requirements for the Annual Meeting can be found in the *Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units*, Article VII, Section 2. This meeting may also be designated as the elections meeting.

Each PTA chooses the time and month for this meeting and should have the date approved by the site administrator so as not to conflict with the school calendar. This meeting will affect other considerations for each PTA, such as whether the president-elect can attend the annual California State PTA convention. The bylaws specify that the president-elect shall be entitled to be a delegate to convention. Schedule your annual meeting far enough in advance so that you have a president-elect prior to convention registration deadlines.

A general meeting at which the PTA nominating committee is elected must precede the annual meeting. You must elect this committee in advance according to the bylaws. Place the election of the nominating committee on the agenda for a meeting scheduled at least two months prior to the election meeting. Bylaws indicate the slate of officers must be announced one month prior to the election meeting. Upon election, your officers-elect should have sufficient time to fill appointed positions and begin planning for the new PTA year.

If the date in your current bylaws does not provide the best opportunities for handling these various PTA business considerations, it may be time to revise your bylaws. The date for this annual meeting appears several times in the bylaws; make sure they match.

How do you make changes to your bylaws? A committee is appointed to review and revise as necessary. The executive board approves the amendments and the parliamentarian then forwards five copies through channels—to council and to district—where they are eventually reviewed and approved or disapproved and returned through channels by the California State PTA Parliamentarian. Make sure to keep a copy of the revisions pending their return. These approved revisions are presented to the membership for approval following adequate notice as set forth in the bylaws.

Review your bylaws regularly. If you need assistance, contact your council or PTA district parliamentarian.

PTA Term Limits

The *Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units* clearly state the length of a term of office for elected positions. Article V, Section 8 reads: “Officers may serve for a term of one year or until their successors are elected. No officer shall be eligible to the same office for more than two consecutive terms or hold more than one office.” PTAs with two year terms “shall serve for a term of two years or until their successors have been elected.”

No one can be nominated by a committee, by floor nomination or by the board-elect or executive board to serve in a position for which he or she has already served the maximum number of years.

The phrase, “or until their successors have been elected” is a direct quote from *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised* and is necessary to allow the current officer to fulfill the duties of the position in the event an election has not been held. It is not meant to extend the length of the term nor does it allow for the person to hold the position into the next term.

If the election has been held and the office has not been filled, the bylaws delegate the authority to fill the vacant position to the executive board. **The current individual does not continue to serve in the position into the next term.**

PTAs knowingly violating any portion of their bylaws may be subject to penalties including, but not limited to, probation or withdrawal of their charter.



From the President...

Very best wishes to each of you for a wonderful 2003! I happen to be one of those people who loves the opportunities each new year brings—those windows for energetic initiation of new projects and another crack at some of those “leftovers”.

Looking back at the past year we can all be proud. I am very encouraged by our many accomplishments. Together,

- We translated the *California State PTA Toolkit* which will be available soon for our Hispanic leaders
- We delivered PTA extension training modules to every PTA district in the state
- We revised the *PEP Program Guide*.
- We conducted one of the best conventions...**Ever!**
- We played an important part in the passage of Proposition 47 and Proposition 49
- We piloted our *Hispanic Outreach Program* in San Diego and Imperial counties
- We showed our support for art in education—a gorgeous new mural for all to see on the south wall of the office in Los Angeles
- We maintained momentum on those myriad everyday actions and tasks that keep our membership informed and motivated

These things, and so much more, are our job. They are what keep PTA the most credible and respected child advocacy organization in this state. You are the reasons for that success—your dedication, your drive, your determination that our children will be safe, healthy and well-educated. Again, thanks.

It is essential we keep this energy going as we end one term and continue planning and implementing the next. Resting on our laurels or letting the next board handle it is lame duck thinking. That is *not* an option.

Rather, let us be positive and dedicate ourselves to the legislative conference in February and an even better 2003 convention. Let’s be aware that parent involvement is a must in the pre-service curriculum of teacher training as we approach our summit with college and university leaders to collaborate on the formation and implementation of parent involvement standards.

Finally, we will all need to be alert and smart and busy if we are going to protect funding for schools and education during what may be one of the leanest budget years in California history.

You’ve done a fantastic job! Be assured you *will* continue to be called on for your support and tireless effort.

Happy New Year!

Jan Harp Domene, California State PTA President
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Founders Day: Putting Children First Since 1897

Annually, members gather on February 17 to celebrate Founders Day. On that day we pay tribute to the three women—Alice McLellan Birney, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, and Selena Sloan Butler—in our history who challenged the barriers society had erected that prevented children from becoming healthy, happy, and productive human beings.

These women and their successors worked hard to promote and advocate for a safer, healthier, and better world for children during a time when many ills needed to be corrected and protective measures needed to be put in place. The support of our founders and countless others helped lawmakers implement vital legislation for the nation’s children. Child labor laws, a public health service, hot lunch programs in schools, a juvenile justice system, mandatory childhood immunizations, and a federal law banning racial-segregated schools eventually were accepted as national norms.

On Founders Day National PTA also pays tribute to you—the more than 6 million volunteers—who carry out our mission in schools and communities across the country. Whether advocating for more funds for public education, mobilizing communities to prevent youth violence, encouraging schools to promote tolerance, or helping families cope in times of national tragedy, PTA has taken a leadership role.

PTA is the parent voice urging everyone to act responsibly toward our country’s children. And we encourage each one of you to continue following our founders’ idea for a better world: If we can improve the lives of children, we can create a better future.

Shirley Igo, National PTA President





From the Communications & Parenting Education Commissions...

Taking charge of your television is defined as control over what you and your children watch on television. Being television aware means critical viewing skills. It suggests media literacy techniques that can

change your relationship to TV—thus changing the potential impact of television on your children and you.

- 1. TV programs and their messages are created to achieve specific results.** Viewers participate by interpreting what's presented and "making sense" of it for themselves.
- 2. Each person interprets programs and messages differently.** A common assumption about television is that all people watching a given show interpret or "read" its messages in a similar way, or receive the same impression. It is particularly important for parents to recognize that children receive and interpret messages differently at different ages.
- 3. Television violence takes many forms.** Violence grabs viewers' attention. Forms of violence include: realistic and unrealistic; justified and unjustified; humorous, irrelevant, evil, thrilling, even sexy. The American Medical Association says "TV violence is a risk factor threatening the health and welfare of young Americans, indeed our future society." Choose your child's TV images wisely.
- 4. All TV programs have an underlying economic purpose.** The television industry is in business to make money. It is important to recognize that television exists to deliver audiences to advertisers. It's commercial in every sense of the word; it is important to teach children that commercial television is not "free" entertainment. It makes money by selling advertisements to viewers.

Suggestions for Taking Charge of your TV Viewing

- 1. Make TV watching a conscious, planned-for activity.**
 - Children should ask your permission to watch TV and not be allowed to just casually "channel surf" to see if anything sparks their interest.
 - Establish family guidelines for selecting programs.
 - Set limits on how much TV your family watches.
- 2. Choose programs together.**
 - Take time one day each week to review TV program guides for the week ahead.
 - Decide together how your children will "spend" their TV viewing hours.

3. Make TV watching an interactive family event.

- Watch together, and use every opportunity to talk about what you are seeing and hearing.
- Television can stimulate conversation about topics that some families find difficult to discuss, such as feelings about divorce or appropriate sexual behavior.
- Make a particular point of responding to sexism, racism and unnecessary violence, but remember to point out positive portrayals on television as well.
- Plan special viewing times to watch with your child and let TV expand and enlarge your world.

4. Use TV as a springboard for other learning experiences.

- TV can create interest in a new topic or idea, thus providing opportunities to learn more about them in other ways.
- When a TV topic sparks your child's interest, explore the subject further at the library, museum or on the Internet.
- During program breaks, ask children what they think might happen next. This helps develop verbal skills and creative thinking.
- Use TV shows to inspire creative expression through drawing or writing.
- The schedule of TV shows can be a good way for children to learn how to tell time.
- Having your child tell you about a program you missed will help develop valuable communication skills.

Five Things To Teach Your Children About Commercials

- 1. Incredible, indestructible toys.** Many toy commercials present toys in life-like fashion, doing incredible things. This would be fine if the toys really did these things. Often they do not.
- 2. Playing with our emotions.** Commercials often create an emotional feeling that draws you into the advertisement and makes you feel good.
- 3. Pictures of ideal children.** The children in commercials are a little older and a little more perfect than the ads' target audience.
- 4. Products in the very best light.** Selective editing is used in all commercials. Commercials show only brilliant and perfect images. That is not the way most children experience these toys or other products.
- 5. Big names=Big bucks.** Sports heroes, movies stars and teenage heart throbs tell our children what to eat and what to wear. Children may not realize that the stars are paid handsomely for endorsements.

Getting Involved With Your Children

Put on a happy face. At the end of a busy day your feet may hurt and your head may pound, but when your youngsters come running to you full of enthusiasm about something at school, put on a smile and match their excitement. When you put them off “Later, later,” their joy in the accomplishment disappears.

Table talk. Talk about what your children are learning in school while at the table eating supper. After the meal is finished, pass around any papers they’ve brought home for everyone to discuss and admire.

Don't stow it, show it! Instead of stowing school papers and artwork in a forgotten drawer, show them off. Use a wall, the refrigerator door, or a bulletin board for the display. Take a minute now and then to look at the changing displays with each child and talk about how proud you are of the work that’s exhibited. When papers are taken down from the bulletin board, preserve them in a special “portfolio” folder for periodic review.

Change “What did you get?” to “What did you learn?” When tests and reports come home, take the emphasis off the grades and focus instead on the information and skills they learned by doing the work. Give children a chance to show what they know by asking simple questions about the subject. Increase your children’s knowledge by sharing anything you know about the topic, or by looking it up in an encyclopedia.

Talking texts. Ask your youngsters to read their textbooks to you while you fix dinner, sort laundry, or drive the car. Any text will do – a reader, a social studies book, even a math book. When they finish a section, discuss any questions the

book presents in order to expand their comprehension of the ideas in the text.

Classroom chronicles. Children who get home before their parents can record descriptions of the school day on cassette tape, while events are still fresh in their minds. These Classroom Chronicles don’t replace the time you spend with your children, but rather serve as springboards for discussion when you listen to them with your kids later in the evening.

Family merry-go-round. When you ask “What happened in school today,” and get the answer, “Nothin’ much,” it’s time to hop on the Family Merry-Go-Round. Start a sentence that each person in the family must complete in turn. “The most surprising thing I learned today was...” “One of the things I did well today was...” The sentence merrily goes ‘round till everyone has shared their experiences.

“I can” cans. Give each child an empty juice can covered with contact paper and labeled “My I CAN Can.” Whenever your children learn a new skill, be it academic, artistic, or athletic, write it on a piece of paper and stuff it in the can. Review the contents of the cans periodically, and watch your children’s self-esteem soar.

Make mistakes okay. When children can learn from their mistakes, instead of feeling discouraged by them, they are on the road to success. Make mistakes okay by talking about your own errors: “One mistake I made today was...” Encourage your youngsters to describe mistakes that they made, and then talk about solutions: “One way I can keep from making this mistake again is...”

Parenting Education Commission

How To Help Your Child Succeed

How to Help Your Child Succeed is the newest offering in the workshop series of National PTA’s parent involvement initiative **Building Successful Partnerships**. To emphasize the importance and benefits of parent involvement, this workshop demonstrates 10 ways that parents can be involved with their children to help them succeed not only in school, but throughout life. The workshop can be presented in one 90-minute or two 45-minute sessions. In the first 45-minutes, participants examine five things parents can do at home to help their child succeed.

1. Let’s talk–Talk with your children
2. Reach for the Sky–Set high but realistic expectations
3. I’m OK, you’re OK–Build your child’s self-esteem and confidence
4. An apple a day–Keep your child healthy
5. Parents, the first teachers–Support learning at home.

In the second 45-minutes, participants look at another five things parents can do–this time to help their child succeed within the school and community.

6. Getting connected!–Communicate with your child’s school.
7. Oh, the places we’ll go!–Encourage exploration and discovery.
8. Circle of friends–Help your child develop good relationships.
9. Stayin’ alive–Keep your child safe
10. Can I help?–Participate in community service.

Additional resources include an area on National PTA’s Web site <www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/index.asp> called **How to Help Your Child Succeed**, which includes the 10 ways and provides links to other National PTA resources on these topics.

Contact the California State PTA vice president for parenting education at 213-620-1100 ext. 307 or by Email at <parentingeducation@capta.org> if you are interested in having this workshop presented at your school or PTA meeting.

Children and Lyme Disease in California

by Phyllis Mervine, Ed.M.

The tick that carries Lyme disease has been found in all but three California counties. The highest attach rates are in children aged 0-14 years and adults 30 and over. The tiny nymphal form of the tick responsible for most human infection is the size of a poppy seed and its bite is painless. It feeds for a few days and drops off. Half the people diagnosed with Lyme disease never realize they have been bitten.

Lyme disease may start with a rash and nonspecific flu-like symptoms, though only 9% develop the classic "bull's-eye" rash. Serologic tests are not reliable and miss over 30% of Lyme cases. Failure to recognize Lyme disease early in its course can result in a child developing a chronic, difficult-to-treat infection in the brain, eyes, joints, heart, gastrointestinal system, and/or elsewhere in the body.

Dr. Charles Ray Jones, a Connecticut pediatrician who has treated over 6,000 children with tick borne diseases, tells teachers and parents to be on the lookout for severe fatigue unrelieved by rest, insomnia, headaches, nausea, abdominal pain, impaired concentration, poor short-term memory, difficulty thinking and expressing thoughts, difficulty reading and writing, being overwhelmed by schoolwork, difficulty making decisions, confusion, uncharacteristic behavior, outbursts and mood swings, fevers/chills, joint pain, dizziness, noise and light sensitivity.

"All infected children have a decline in the way they play and perform in school," says Jones. "They are tired and wilt easily. They have dark circles under their eyes. They are sick. All respond to months or years of continuous antibiotic therapy."

Lyme disease is under-diagnosed and under-reported, creating a vicious cycle where it is often very difficult to be diagnosed and treated adequately. It is important to seek out a physician knowledgeable about Lyme disease and other tick-borne infection. Most children do very well when diagnosed and treated promptly.

Education videos on Lyme disease may be purchased by contacting Dolly Curtis Interviews by Email at

<dollycurtistv@aol.com>

or visit their Web site at

<www.dollycurtisinterviews.com>.

Phyllis Mervine is president of the northern California-based Lyme Disease Resource Center. She is the mother of five grown children, three of whom have Lyme disease. She may be reached by Email at

<pmerv@direcway.com>.

Health Commission



26th Annual EdSource Forum California School Reforms: *Show Me the Data!*

A revolution is under way in how California uses education data to measure and improve school and student performance. As the state has embraced standards-based school reforms, the pressure has increased to collect and use student performance data at the local level to improve instruction and learning. Can all this focus on data make a real difference? Come and participate in the debate!

Thursday, April 3, 2003
Sheraton Suites Fairplex, Pomona
Southern California

Friday, April 4, 2003
The Westin Santa Clara
Northern California

\$60 for PTA members

Register by March 3 and pay just \$50!

Call the EdSource office at 650-857-9604 for a Forum brochure or visit EdSource's Web site at
<www.edsource.org>.

Middle School/High School Parent Involvement Resources Online

"Don't talk to me, my friends are watching!" How often, as the parent of a teenager, have you heard this? This can be a difficult and trying time for some parents, but it doesn't have to be. That's why National PTA has made the "Middle School/High School Parent Involvement Resource Kit" available online to the public.

The "Middle School/High School Parent Involvement Resource Kit" consists of six sections dealing with different areas of parent involvement. It offers valuable advice for parents in dealing with their teens' attitudes toward parent involvement, as well as advice for parents struggling to connect with their teenage kids.

The Web site also provides recent research findings about the effects of parent involvement among schools nationwide, and offers tips for creating parent-teacher-student associations (PTSAs) to better involve students in middle school and high school programs.

To access this resource kit visit the National PTA members Web site at

<www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/helpchild/mshs
_section1.asp>.



From the Finance Commission...

Semi-Annual Audit

According to the **Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units**, Article VI, Section 8, an audit shall be performed semi-annually. That means, now is the time!

An audit is conducted to determine the accuracy of the books. It will detect inconsistencies or errors, protect the financial officers, verify that funds have been sent through channels as appropriate, and assure the membership that the association's resources/funds are being managed in a businesslike manner within the regulations established for their use.

To begin the audit, all financial books, records and reports, minutes of meetings (executive board and association), bylaws, and standing rules, and committee reports from the Ways and Means and Membership chairmen must be collected.

All receipts must be examined and compared with the treasurer's ledger. The auditor, or appointed committee, must verify that deposits were made promptly and were credited in the proper columns. The auditor must verify that amounts were totaled correctly, must verify the number of memberships with the membership chairman, must check event reports to verify receipts and expenditures, must check disbursements, and must ensure authorization for all warrants issued and payments made recorded in minutes. Checks and warrants must be signed by the proper officers and all bank statements must have been reconciled with the checkbook.

When the audit is completed, the auditor must meet with the financial committee and president to make necessary corrections. If errors have been corrected and accounts are accurate, the auditor will draw a double line in red ink where the audit concludes and sign and date the ledger.

The auditor must prepare a signed, written report. If all is in order, prepare the following statement. "The audit committee has/I have examined the books and records of the treasurer, financial secretary, and secretary of _____ PTA and found them correct."

If there is a problem with the audit, prepare one of the following statements.

"The audit committee has/I have examined the books of the treasurer, financial secretary, and secretary of _____ PTA and find that more adequate accounting procedures need to be followed so that a more thorough audit report can be given."

"The audit committee has/I have examined the books the books of the treasurer, financial secretary, and secretary of _____ PTA and find them incorrect with the following recommendations."

"The audit committee has/I have examined the books of the treasurer, financial secretary, and secretary of _____ PTA and find them incorrect."

The semi-annual audit is extremely important to the smooth functioning of the unit. Be sure yours is completed as soon as possible.

Staff Appreciation Celebrations

With "Teacher Appreciation Week" and "Classified School Employees Week" just around the corner this article will clarify how PTAs/PTSAs can recognize school staff for a job well done.

According to the Finance Section of the California State PTA *Toolkit*, Section 5.8.1, "PTA funds should not be used to purchase personal gifts, equipment for staff lounges and lunchrooms or for furnishings for principals' offices. Personal gifts include baby showers, "Secretary's Day," bereavements, weddings, or birthdays. If the membership determines that such items are necessary, individual members can make personal donations to purchase the designated items. These donations should not be commingled with PTA funds."


However, this does not mean that the PTA cannot conduct activities to recognize teachers and staff. If a unit chooses to recognize school staff with a "Staff Appreciation Day," a line item must be included in the annual budget. This line item should estimate expenses for such things as materials, supplies, and/or hospitality. Remember, all projects, programs, and activities must be approved by a vote of the association.

It is recommended that a specific project be chosen in which students actively participate. Think of a project that is inexpensive and fun.

- A basket of appropriate supplies for each staff member with items donated by the students' families.
- A book of thank you notes or articles from the students to teachers, custodian, secretary, etc.
- Laminated placemats of special drawings by the students.

Keep it a surprise. Ask teachers for a few minutes to speak with the students privately. Tell the students that the PTA wants to surprise school staff with a special recognition. Ask for the students' help. Create a flyer for students to take home to their parents requesting donations.

If you plan to provide a luncheon, seek sponsorship from local markets and restaurants to minimize the cost. There are many ways to recognize school staff without spending much money. Be creative.



Due January 31 to California State PTA

Insurance Premiums Final Due Date

Workers' Compensation
Annual Payroll report due

For both items adhere to earlier
PTA district and/or council deadlines.

CAPTA STORE

www.captastore.com

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- Binders for the Toolkit and
- Annual Resources for PTAs
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Available soon...

T-Shirts, Polo shirts,
Pins and much more
with the Convention
2003 logo.



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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 represent our members and to empower and support them with skills in advocacy, leadership and communication to positively impact the lives of all children. *Adopted March 1999.*

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