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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE PTA

FEBRUARY 2005

Electing the Nominating Committee



The *Bylaws for Local PTAs/PTSAs* state that the nominating committee is elected by the membership **at an association meeting** at least two months prior to the annual election. In most PTAs, the election meeting is scheduled for March or April, meaning that the nominating committee would need to be elected at an association meeting by January or February.

The bylaws also specify how many members and alternates are elected and who is eligible to serve on the committee. No member is eligible to serve on the nominating committee for two consecutive years. The unit president never sits on the nominating committee.

The members of the committee have a tremendous influence on the future of your PTA and should be carefully selected. Nominating committee members should have a broad acquaintance with the membership and an understanding of the organization's functions and its purposes. The committee should include both experienced leadership as well as newer members. The school site administrator serves as an advisor to the committee. The *California State PTA Toolkit* lists the qualities of nominating committee members and the responsibilities of the committee under Section 2.2.

The Duties of the Nominating Committee

The parliamentarian confers with the committee members and sets the date for the first meeting of the nominating

committee. At the first meeting, the parliamentarian reads that section of the unit bylaws (Article V, Section 2) indicating which officers are elected at the unit's annual election and provides copies of Section 2.2 of the *California State PTA Toolkit* (pages pertaining to the responsibilities of the nominating committee). The parliamentarian then conducts the committee's election of its chairman. Unless previously elected as a member of the nominating committee, the parliamentarian does not stay for the actual deliberations.

The nominating process must be done in an orderly way. Discussions during the nominating committee meetings are strictly confidential, and no information should leave the meeting. The committee is not obligated to nominate any current officer eligible to serve a second term. They are obligated to seek out the best member to serve in a particular office.

The names of the nominees must be submitted to the membership thirty (30) days prior to the election. The final responsibility of the nominating committee is fulfilled when the chairman reads the committee's report at the election meeting.

In the event that a nominee withdraws prior to the election, the committee must reconvene to select another nominee. A revised report of the nominating committee naming the revised slate of nominees is read at the election meeting prior to election proceedings. After the election, a vacancy in any office is filled by the board-elect.

Parliamentarian

Convention 2005



Mark your calendar now to attend the California State PTA convention in Sacramento April 28 through May 1, 2005. The convention welcomes students and adults to come together for a common cause – children.

Convention is an excellent PTA investment, a worthwhile leadership expense and a legitimate PTA budget expense.

Come to convention to receive up-to-date information, informative program ideas, and resources that you can take back and implement in your schools and PTA units. Please join us. You will return home with new ideas, important skills and recharged energy.



From the President...

Those involved in PTA share different perspectives, experiences, and ideas. The differences and diversity of ideas enrich the organization and the work we do. The fact that we all bring something different to PTA is our power. Diversity is our strength.

En la PTA, nos gusta compartir diferentes perspectivas, experiencias e ideas. Las diferencias y la diversidad de las ideas enriquecerán la organización y nuestro trabajo. El hecho que todos aportamos algo diferente a la PTA es nuestra poder. La diversidad es nuestra poder.

Those involved in PTA share common ground. We share a passion for improving the lives of all children. We want what is best for our children and their school experience.

When a school has a PTA working

with it, that school has better informed and engaged parents, a more supportive learning environment for students, and a better reputation in its community. Research shows that schools with well-structured, consistent parent involvement programs – like PTA – are more likely to experience profound benefits for parents, students, teachers, and overall school quality.

Becoming a member of PTA gives you a voice to influence what happens in your school. It gives you a vote in PTA plans and projects that benefit the children in your school. It gives you a voice on important issues that affect not only your child, but all children.

As a member of PTA, your voice is magnified as it joins the voices of the over one million members in California who also care about children. The more members we have, the more PTA can do for your child and your school.

For more than a century, PTA has been tackling issues that might not have been addressed otherwise: child labor laws, kindergarten in public schools, federally funded hot-lunch program, school bus safety, and content-based TV ratings. Today, PTA strives to increase parent involvement in schools, establish school-based after-school programs, improve health-care access and healthy lifestyles, and advocate for a greater funding investment in public education.

When you join PTA you help address issues that really matter to parents. You support an association working on behalf of your child, and all children. You join others who want to make a difference.

Bring your diverse perspectives, experiences, and ideas to PTA. Join today and enrich the lives of all children. Diversity is our strength.

*Carla Niño, President
California State PTA*

Who Runs Your PTA?

Many PTA units have asked us to clarify the chain of command in PTA. What role does the principal have? Does the executive board or the president make the important decisions? What rights do individual members have in the “power structure”? We encourage you to share this column with your board, principal and general membership. Don’t wait until you have a problem before you inform your unit of the correct PTA procedures and structure.

PRINCIPAL:

The principal serves as advisor on the nominating committee, has prior approval of PTA information sent home through the school, and works with the president and board on unit programs and activities. The principal is a full voting member of the PTA board. The principal does not control the PTA’s money but does vote along with other board members and general members on how it should be spent.

We urge you to develop a positive, cooperative effort with your principal. PTA is an independently chartered and incorporated organization through the state of California and the IRS, and is fully accountable to our grassroots membership – the membership must vote on approving activities and expenditures. PTA is not a fund-raising organization for the school but an advocacy organization for the children.

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

The executive board plans and carries out activities, programs and expenditures. Final approval is always made by your membership. The president sets the agenda for each meeting but should seek input from the board members. Board members can make motions and suggestions. The president should seek input from the board and should not act like a dictator.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP:

The general membership is the most important component of your PTA. The general membership “owns” the organization. Your members should approve your budget, approve all expenditures of funds, and approve all programs and activities. An executive board meeting does not replace the necessity of reporting and obtaining approval of your membership for all PTA business. You must publicize all general meetings in advance and offer members an opportunity to speak at meetings.

Remember – if you have any questions or problems, your council (if in council) and PTA district are always available to help!

Leadership Services Commission

Is Your PTA a Clique?

Clique: a small, exclusive group of people.

Does your PTA have room to grow? Are you welcoming new parents? Are you open to change? Are you building bridges? Do you reflect the cultures in your school? Are you dad-friendly? Are you making the word “clique” obsolete in your PTA?

PTA’s common ground is our children, and our children deserve the best we can give. PTA’s mission is to support and speak on behalf of every child with one voice.

If your PTA/PTSA is having trouble reflecting the cultures of your school, make diversity and inclusiveness a top priority. Here are a few tips to help you make all parents and friends know they are welcome and needed:

- Arrange a meeting with individuals who can help. Be open to what needs to change. Listen to what your PTA needs to do to make people feel they belong. Then go out and do it!
- Start a leadership training program. Invite new parents, parents who have not been involved, members of the community, and businesses to participate.
- Create a position on your board for diversity/cultural development, and promote diversity in your school. Provide a diversity resource each month for students and parents. Celebrate the uniqueness of your students, and incorporate that diversity into school activities.
- Train your board on diversity issues. Focus on a different aspect of diversity at each board meeting. Learn to watch for the warning signs of a clique, and take action before one develops.
- Contact the local community college or university, and ask them to help develop educational programs on inclusiveness for your meetings. Many colleges have students conducting research on diversity/inclusiveness issues or developing projects to increase diversity awareness who would be glad to help your PTA.

Open your doors, and make your PTA/PTSA a large, open, inclusive group of people that has no boundaries.

*National PTA Field Service Newsletter
October 2004*

Talking With Kids About Eating Disorders

Recent news that teen actress and pop icon Mary-Kate Olsen entered a residential program for treatment of anorexia quickly hit the front pages. While the media’s coverage of eating disorders has generally improved over the last decade, unrealistic body images are everywhere and the pressures to be thin are great, especially for girls.

Between five and 10 million Americans have eating disorders. They are more prevalent in teenagers and young adults and occur more commonly in girls, though boys also suffer from these illnesses. An estimated one percent of American teens suffer from some form of eating disorder.

Anorexia and bulimia are the most common types of eating disorders. Anorexia is characterized by a fear of becoming fat and an unrealistic body image, which lead a person to restrict the amount of food they eat, sometimes severely. Bulimia is characterized by bingeing and purging—eating excessive amounts of food and then forcing vomiting. All eating disorders involve preoccupations with weight and food, but they are often rooted in other issues. Studies have found that people with eating disorders often control their food to compensate for aspects of their life which feel out of their control. They may suffer from low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy, troubled family or personal relationships, or a history of being teased because of their weight. Studies also have shown that eating disorders tend to run in families.

As parents, it is important to teach our daughters and sons positive and healthy attitudes toward their bodies. Don’t be afraid to initiate this discussion. Media coverage of celebrity eating issues offers an opportunity to ask your child what he or she thinks. Magazine images give you a chance to talk about how healthy, fit bodies don’t all look the same. You may be surprised at how simple comments or questions could help start a valuable discussion.

If you suspect that your child has an eating disorder, it is important to address the problem as soon as possible. According to the National Eating Disorders Association, parents should communicate their concerns without judgment and without oversimplifying the issue. Express your support and seek professional treatment—although in most cases eating disorders are curable, they are complicated and very serious. Your child’s doctor should be able to help.

For more information about eating disorders, visit:

- Nemours Foundation’s KidsHealth
<http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/food_fitness/problems/eat_disorder.html>
- National Eating Disorders Association
<<http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org>>
- Download your FREE “Talking with Kids” parent booklet at:
<<http://www.talkingwithkids.org/booklet.html>>

Health Commission

Megan’s Law Internet Site

Information on the whereabouts of registered sex offenders is now available to the public on the Attorney General’s website. The new California Megan’s Law Internet site provides the public with detailed information on more than 63,000 registered sex offenders, including those currently incarcerated.

Visit: <<http://MegansLaw.ca.gov>> or <<http://caag.state.ca.us>>.

Community Concerns Commission

Class Size Reduction Bill SB 311 (Sher) Becomes Law

After almost four years of controversy over class size reduction in grades K-3, the Governor signed a bill, SB 311 (Sher), incorporating the PTA's suggestion to adjust the penalties for exceeding 20 students in a class.

The Class Size Reduction Program provides incentive funding for each class in which the class size average is no larger than 20. Under SB 311, instead of losing all funding for exceeding this class size average, the funding is reduced in steps.

During recent legislative sessions, the PTA had strongly opposed a series of bills that would have changed the class size reduction program to allow class size to increase above 20 in many grade K-3 classes, essentially without any financial penalty.

The PTA supported legislation that continues an economic incentive to maintain class size at 20 or less. The PTA believes there should be no more than 20 students in grades K-3 based on extensive research that shows that smaller classes help young children do better in school.

Background:

In June 2003 the California State PTA sent an open letter to members of the California Legislature restating our belief that there must be no more than twenty children with a qualified teacher in each kindergarten through 3rd grade classroom.

At the same time, recognizing the concerns of school districts regarding the implementation of the CSR program, the PTA suggested ways to provide flexibility in the program that maintain the integrity of CSR:

- Adjust the penalty provisions for exceeding the 20:1 limit. The key idea in this proposal is that schools would have an economic incentive to keep classes small. A class would receive its full CSR funding for maintaining class size at or below 20 and would only lose funding on a proportional basis if the average class size exceeded 20. This proposal would provide flexibility and maintain the integrity of CSR as an incentive program to reduce class size.
- Give school districts more flexibility in determining the order of grade

level implementation. (NOTE: This suggestion was deleted from the final amended bill as sent to the Governor.)

New Law

Under SB 311 the penalty provisions are adjusted. A class would lose

- 20% (of the amount paid for a class of 20.4) for classes with an enrollment of 20.5 but less than 21.0,
- 40% for classes of 21 but less than 21.5,
- 80% for classes of 21.5 but less than 21.9,
- All CSR funding for any class size of 21.9 or above.

In signing the bill, the Governor said, "I am signing Senate Bill 311 in order to provide school districts some flexibility in implementing their K-3 class size reduction programs, without compromising the integrity of the program. Because the fiscal relief contained in this bill is available through July 1, 2009, I expect this flexibility to be adequate for school districts to continue maintaining smaller class sizes without any further State action through that time period."

While the Governor's language indicates that he considers this issue closed until 2009, School Services of California, which had lobbied heavily for increasing class size in some classes above 20 as a solution to the issue, continues to comment that the issue is not completely resolved as far as they are concerned.

Legislation Team

CALIFORNIA STATE PTA POSITION ON CLASS SIZE REDUCTION

Reduced Class Size in Grades K-3

Adopted July 1996 - Revised March 2002

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.

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.

SUMMARY OF NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT IN THE WILLIAMS V. STATE OF CALIFORNIA EDUCATION LAWSUIT

Williams v. State of California is a statewide class action lawsuit about California's duty to provide every public school student with instructional materials, safe and decent school facilities, and qualified teachers. After four years of litigation, the parties in the case reached a Settlement Agreement on August 13, 2004. The Settlement Agreement provides for a package of legislative proposals designed to ensure that all students will have books in specified subjects and that their schools will be clean and in safe condition. The legislation also takes steps toward assuring that children have qualified teachers. The California Legislature has already passed statutes implementing the settlement and the new laws will begin taking effect during the current school year. If the Court approves the settlement, some lawsuits brought over the next four years by students, parents, and teachers may be prohibited. San Francisco Superior Court Judge Peter J. Busch will decide whether to approve the settlement at a hearing in San Francisco on March 23, 2005 at 9 a.m. You may submit written comments to the Court regarding this settlement and you can appear in Court to testify at the hearing. You can find out more information about this class action and the March 23 court hearing and get a complete copy of plaintiffs' Notice of Settlement and other related documents at <www.decentsschools.org> or by calling the toll-free information line, 1-877-532-2533.

Get School ID Cards and Safety Products Absolutely Free...Forever

PTA schools are invited to become charter members of a free Nationwide Child Safety Program from Kidz-IDz, a proud sponsor of National PTA, to keep students safer both at school and at home using “two steps to safety”:

- **Step one:** Each student receives a free personalized school ID card every year, for as long as he or she attends the school. The cards are customized with the student’s photo and important personal data, plus the school’s name, address, and phone number in school colors.
- **Step two:** Additionally at no cost, each student receives safety products (a personal security device, DNA kit, fingerprinting kit, glow sticks, child first aid kit, and a safety board game), and the school receives safety education materials (a set of child safety videos, safety board game and safety books).

This FREE Nationwide Child Safety Program is part of an all out effort to increase child safety awareness and education in all of America’s schools. It was developed in partnership with the Vanished Children’s Alliance (VCA), the nation’s oldest nonprofit child protection agency. Other supporters of this program include the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Sheriffs’ Association, the American Association of School Administrators, and the Starlight Children’s Foundation.

For more information about participating in this program, visit <<http://www.2stepstosafety.com/pta/>> or call JoAnne Winterberg at (856) 874-0600 Ext. 110.

Community Concerns Commission

Monitor Homework

Let your child know that you think education is important, and that homework has to be done. Here are some ways to help your child with homework:

- Have a special place for your child to study. The homework area doesn’t have to be fancy. A desk in the bedroom is nice, but for many children the kitchen table or a corner of the living room works as well. The area should have good lighting and it should be fairly quiet. Provide supplies and identify resources. Basics include pencils, pens, erasers, writing paper and a dictionary. Other supplies that might be helpful are a stapler, paper clips, maps, a calculator, a pencil sharpener, tape, glue, paste, scissors, a ruler, index cards, a thesaurus, and an almanac. If possible, keep these items together in one place. If you can’t provide your child with needed supplies, check with the teacher, school counselor, or principal about possible sources of assistance.
- Set a regular time for homework. Having a regular time to do homework helps children to finish assignments. A good schedule depends in part on the child’s age as well as her specific needs. You’ll need to work with a young child to develop a schedule. An older child should be given the responsibility for making up a schedule independently, although you’ll want to make sure that it is workable. It may be helpful to have her write out her schedule and put it in a place where you’ll see it often, such as on the refrigerator.
- Remove distractions. Turn off the television and discourage your child from making and receiving social telephone calls during homework time. (A call to a class-

mate about an assignment, however, may be helpful.) If you live in a small or noisy household, try having all family members take part in a quiet activity during homework time. You may need to take a noisy toddler outside or into another room to play. If distractions can’t be avoided, your child may want to complete assignments in the local library.

- Don’t expect or demand perfection. When your child asks you to look at what she’s done - from skating a figure “8” to finishing a math assignment - show interest and praise her when she’s done something well. If you have criticisms or suggestions, make them in a helpful way.

A final note: You may be reluctant to help your child with homework because you feel that you don’t know the subject well enough or because you don’t speak or read English as well as your child. But helping with homework doesn’t mean doing the homework. It isn’t about solving the problems for your child, it’s about supporting him to do his best. You may not know enough about a subject such as calculus to help your child with a specific assignment, but you can help nonetheless by showing that you are interested, helping him get organized, providing a place and the materials he needs to work, monitoring his work to see that he completes it, and praising his efforts.

U.S. Department of Education
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National PTA School Facility Advocacy Campaign

The National PTA announced a new advocacy campaign at their most recent convention: School Construction and Renovation to Promote Healthy Schools. Fourteen million children attend schools in need of major repair or replacement, and the use of portable classrooms is growing by 20% each year. California schools are no exception. These inadequate conditions have led to overcrowding, health and safety hazards, and lower academic performance. A safe, healthy and modern learning environment is especially important as we strive to meet the rigorous standards set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act. The new Congressional session will introduce bills that would partner the federal government with local communities to provide the long-term funding needed to build, repair, and modernize our schools. Join in this advocacy campaign today. Information on the campaign and other legislative priorities can be downloaded from the National PTA website: <www.pta.org/members/respub/order/legact.pdf>.

PTA, Banking and the USA Patriot Act

Congress passed the USA Patriot Act in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. President Bush signed the Act into law October 26, 2001. The Act gives federal officials greater authority to track and intercept communications, both for law enforcement and foreign intelligence-gathering purposes.

What does this Act have to do with PTAs? Banks, savings institutions, credit unions, and trust companies had a deadline of October 1, 2003, to implement procedures to verify the identity of persons seeking to open accounts, to verify whether they appear on terrorist lists, and to maintain certain records. The provisions affecting financial institutions are aimed at making it difficult for criminals and terrorists to launder money or finance illicit activities through the U.S. banking system.

Banks can be harshly punished for not having procedures in place or for not following the procedures they do have in place. Banks are required to follow these procedures with all of their customers and cannot treat PTAs differently. PTAs should work with their banks to provide the adequate information that will protect their banks' and their PTA's integrity.

Some of the personal questions on the new application for a commercial account will ask applicants for first school attended, highest grade graduated, personal banking references, and detailed employment information.

Under the Act financial institutions must

- File suspicious activity reports (SARs).
- Impose additional special measures and due diligence requirements to combat money laundering.
- Establish minimum new customer identification standards and record keeping, and recommend an effective means to verify the identity of foreign customers.
- Financial institutions and law enforcement agencies are encouraged to share information concerning suspected money laundering and terrorist activities.
 - National PTA. *This information is presented with the understanding that National PTA does not render legal advice.*

Finance Commission

When a Disaster Occurs

How can PTA help when a disaster strikes?

The *California State PTA Toolkit*, Section 5.8.6, explains how your PTA can help coordinate efforts in your community in the event of a disaster. The *Toolkit* is available at <www.pta.org/resources/Toolkit.cfm>.

Please follow the guidelines provided or contact your district PTA for more information.

Finance Commission

New Pricing for PTA Resources



PEP Guide \$10 (formerly \$20)
Leadership Pocket Pal \$3 (formerly \$2.50)
Finance Pocket Pal \$3 (formerly \$2.50)

In Memoriam



Sara Lee "Chris" Adams California State PTA President 1981-1983

Sara Lee "Chris" Adams, 82, a longtime resident of Lafayette, California, died October 12, 2004. Chris was born in Fort Knox, Kentucky, and grew up in Berkeley, California. She was a graduate of University High School in Oakland, attended the University of California, Berkeley, and received her B.A. from Antioch College. She had a lifelong interest in the welfare of children and youth, serving at the local, state and federal levels in many organizations dealing with delinquency, juvenile justice and substance abuse.

Chris was California State PTA president from 1981 to 1983. She was previously active as a member and officer of local and district PTAs, and was also a Legislative Advocate, Director of Education and Director of Public Welfare for the California State PTA. She served as a member of the National PTA board from 1981-1987. In 1983 she founded the Contra Costa Court Schools PTA, the first court school PTA in California.

The theme for Chris's administration during her California State PTA presidency was "new directions." During her term PTA's priority was adequate school funding; a resolution was adopted to advocate for accountability of the Legislature for financing our schools. PTA successfully implemented a Community Action Training Project and worked with the March of Dimes to conduct parent education seminars. A statewide study of the

Juvenile Justice System was begun during her term. A 1981 PTA resolution, "Admission of Minors to R-Rated Films" led to meetings of parents with theater owners throughout the state to discuss the issue. In her term a membership challenge with the Texas PTA resulted in friendly competition between the two states and a 6% increase in PTA membership in California. In January 1983 Chris described PTA as a risk-taking organization, stating that "the PTA is not afraid to stand up for what it believes is right for children."

In addition to her PTA work, Chris was active in the local community. She worked on the incorporation of Lafayette as a city in 1968, served as a member of the Lafayette Elementary School District Board of Education, and was secretary of the Contra Costa County School Boards Association. She served as member and chair of both the California and Contra Costa County Juvenile Justice Crime and Delinquency Prevention Commissions, was active in the American Red Cross and Girl Scouts of the USA, and was Regional Director of the National Volunteer Bureau Board and member of the California Women's Commission on Alcoholism. She served twice as the Contra Costa County Grand Jury foreman.

She received many awards, including the National PTA Honorary Life Membership Award and the Phoebe Apperson Hearst PTA Award. The Chris Adams Girls' Center in Martinez was named after her in 1999. Chris began her advocacy in the early 70's for a new Contra Costa County juvenile hall, currently under construction. At the time of her death, Chris was co-chair of the Lafayette Senior Services Commission and member of the Contra Costa County Inmate Welfare and Juvenile Systems Planning Advisory Committees.

Chris began helping others as a child. During the Great Depression she baked and sold cookies to make money for holiday gifts for a needy family. "Very early in my life, I reflected on this and realized I was always concerned about what was happening to other people, to other children...I started that way and my attitude never really changed."

Chris is survived by her husband of 62 years, Robert, two sons, a daughter, two foster daughters, seven grandchildren, and one great-grand child. Donations may be made in Chris's memory to the Chris Adams Girl's Center c/o Juvenile Hall Auxiliary, 202 Glacier Drive, Martinez, CA 94553.



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

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The mission of the California State PTA is to repre-
 sent our members and to empower and support
 them with skills in advocacy, leadership and commu-
 nication to positively impact the lives of all children.

Reaffirmed 2004

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