

## Working With Teachers and Schools Helping Your Child Succeed in School

Many teachers say that they don't often receive information from parents about problems at home. Many parents say that they don't know what the school expects from their children—or from them. Sharing information is essential and both teachers and parents are responsible for making it happen.

### What do you do first?

Before the school year begins, learn everything that you can about the school your child will attend. The more you know, the easier your job as a parent will be. Don't rely only on information about the school from other parents—their child might have different needs and expectations from a school than yours.

Ask for a school handbook. This will answer many questions that will arise over the year. If your school doesn't have a handbook, ask the principal and teachers questions.

- What classes does the school offer?
- Which classes are required?
- What are your expectations for my child?
- What are the school's rules and regulations?
- Ask about specific teaching methods and materials—are the methods to teach reading and math based on scientific evidence about what works best? Are the science and history textbooks up to date?
- How does the school measure student progress? What tests does it use?
- Does it meet state standards and guidelines?
- Are the teachers highly qualified? Do they meet state certification requirements?
- Ask to see the school's report card. How does the school compare to others in the district and how well it is succeeding?

Find out if the school has a website and, if so, get the address. School websites can provide you with easy access to all kinds of information—schedules of events, names of people to contact, rules and regulations and so forth.

Keep informed throughout the school year. Attend PTA meetings.

Speak with your child about school. Let him know that you think school and learning are important.

*U.S. Department of Education, Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, Educational Partnerships and Family Involvement Unit, No Child Left Behind*

*Parent Involvement Commission*

### How Can I Get the Most Out of Parent-Teacher Conferences?

- Set up a conference early in the school year. Let the teacher know that you are interested in your child's education and that you want to be kept informed of his progress. If English is your second language, you may need to make special arrangements, such as including someone who is bilingual in the conference.
- If possible, arrange to observe the teaching in your child's classroom. Afterward, speak with the teacher about what you saw and how it fits with your hopes for your child and your child's needs.
- Before a conference, write out questions you want to ask and jot down what you want to tell the teacher. Be prepared to take notes during the conference and don't hesitate to ask for an explanation if you don't understand something.
- Speak with the teacher about your child's talents, hobbies, study habits and any special sensitivities he might have, such as concerns about weight or speech difficulties.
- Tell the teacher if you think your child needs special help and about any special family situation or event that might affect your child's ability or desire to learn. Mention such things as a new baby, an illness, a recent or an upcoming move or divorce.
- Tell the teacher what kind of person you want your child to become and what values are important to you.
- Ask the teacher for specific details about your child's work and progress. If your child has already received some grades, ask how your child is being evaluated.
- Ask about specific things that you can do to help your child. At home, think about what the teacher has said and then follow up. If the teacher has told you that your child needs to improve in certain areas, check back in a few weeks to see how things are going.
- Approach the teacher with a cooperative spirit. If you disagree with the teacher about an issue, don't argue in front of your child. Set up a meeting to speak only about that issue. Before that meeting, plan what you are going to say. Try to be positive and remain calm. Listen carefully. If the teacher's explanation doesn't satisfy you, and you do not think you can make progress by further discussion with the teacher, arrange to speak with the principal or even the school superintendent.

*U.S. Department of Education Office  
No Child Left Behind  
Parent Involvement Commission*



## Everything I Needed to Know I Learned in My Daughter's Kindergarten Class

As many parents do, I volunteered one morning a week in my daughter's kindergarten class. The lessons I learned in that classroom

working with and observing the children have provided me with valuable insights to working with people and skills in leadership. Some of those lessons have been:

**Raise your hand if you have a question.** We all learn at different paces and in different ways. As a PTA leader I must recognize that not everyone "Gets it" at the same time or in the same way. My team will not progress if some have jumped ahead while others still have questions and still others are thinking about recess. You should not hesitate to ask a question if something is not clear. If you simply were not listening, quietly ask someone else, "What's going on?"

**Play Nice.** Working with a group means working with varied personalities and inevitable disagreements. Put it all in perspective when some minor disagreement has occurred and continue to contribute your skills and efforts to achieving the group's goal.

**Learn to Share.** Trying to do everything yourself will lead to burnout and frustration and likely will offend your team members. Learn to delegate tasks and in the process, help develop new PTA leaders.

**Only one subject at a time.** It often seems as if we are trying to juggle several PTA projects and tasks all at once. Develop the practice of prioritizing the tasks to be done and concentrate on only one at a time. Organize your printed materials and notes in separate files.

**Do your homework.** Be prepared for meetings with reports ready to present or distribute. Review the agenda and be ready participate in discussion on the items listed.

**Understand the rules.** Become familiar with the Bylaws and Standing Rules for your particular association and for your particular PTA position. The California State PTA has done all of the hard work of including the requirements of the various governmental agencies that regulate nonprofit organizations in the bylaws and in the *TOOLKIT*.

**It's Okay to Color Outside the Lines.** New views and different approaches will help our organization grow. Don't get caught in the "We've always done it this way" trap.

**Use the Magic Words.** Be considerate of the others on your PTA team and don't forget to say "Please" and "Thank you" frequently even if the issue was not resolved as you might have preferred.

**Don't Run with Scissors.** All PTAs in California participate in the insurance program which furnishes the *Insurance and Loss Prevention Guide* to help us provide programs and activities that are safe. Review the Guide as plans are set for PTA events to insure compliance and insurance coverage.

**Don't Miss Recess.** Take time to have fun.

Brenda Davis  
California State PTA President

## Staying Involved in Your Teenager's Life

Just when you thought you'd have more time to yourself, you realize it takes even more time and energy to raise a teen. Emotional and physical separation from parents is a hallmark of adolescence and a necessary step in the adolescent transition to adulthood. Still, studies suggest that parent involvement is more important in academic success than socioeconomic status, racial or ethnic background, or education of the parents. So, parents often find themselves in a perplexing situation—how do they remain involved in the physical and emotional lives of teenagers who may not want their parents involved?

### Redefine how much time to spend with your teen

Because the involvement required by younger children would smother a teenager, the task facing parents of teenagers is to redefine involvement. What is appropriate given the developmental needs of their teen? What types of behaviors and attitudes would ensure continued involvement with a teenager and yet be tolerated and even welcomed by them?

To foster emotional growth and development, parents must transition from the dispenser of wisdom and absolute authority to that of consultant. Playing a secondary role—such as chauffeur, purveyor of funds, and final authority or consultants on curfew, destinations, and companions—may be a blow to the ego of the parent who was previously the central figure in the child's life; yet, it is necessary to recognize the changing developmental needs of the teen who must establish his or her own identity and begin to take charge of the world in which he or she lives.

It is important to value the "supporting role." Teens may insist on limiting parent involvement to being a non-intrusive presence during an event. That's OK. Just "being there" allows the parent to unobtrusively observe and to be available if needed. For instance, as the chauffeur you'll have an opportunity to get to know your teenager's friends and to learn of their interests and activities.

### Become active in parent organizations and volunteer at your child's school

While it may have been easy and acceptable to go through your child's backpack for grades, teacher comments, and times and dates of school functions, don't try the same routine when your child becomes a teenager. Parents must respect the teen's need for privacy. This is why sharing information with other parents becomes necessary.

Volunteering at school and attending PTA meetings are also means to acquire necessary information. Attendance at PTA meetings is greatest in elementary school and tends to taper off as the child moves to middle and high school. It is often at the middle and high school junctures that directly communicating with other parents and teachers is one of the best, if not the only, way to remain informed about the daily activities of the school.

### Make yourself available

You do not always have to "do something" with your teen or plan an activity. Being available when the teen is likely to be around and inclined to talk is valuable. This will be perceived by the teen as less threatening, less intrusive, and less controlling. Availability in and of itself will provide a non-threatening opportunity for parents to stay connected.

While parents could look forward to at least an hour of "quiet time" after young children were in bed, teens tend to be on a completely different schedule. Allowing yourself to be around late in the evening may afford many opportunities to listen to your teenager. Emphasis is frequently placed on speaking with or even worse "to" your teen. To stay involved, concentrate on what they are saying to you, to siblings, and to friends. Listening must be nonjudgmental. Do not feel the need to instruct, point out, or clarify.

Teens must figure things out for themselves, question assumptions, try different approaches; they are on their way to becoming independent adults. Talking too much may cause your teen to shut down; "just listening" encourages even more talking. An open and receptive approach will provide a better fit for the needs and developmental demands of teens.

Elizabeth Cook, Ph.D.

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Parent Involvement Commission

## Why Should Your School Be Accredited? Part 2

School accreditation is an affirmation by peer professional evaluators that a school is what it says it is, that what it does is in accordance with criteria set by the academic community, and that it is committed to continuous improvement. When your school is accredited, it means the school is focused on a mission and goals for its students; it continuously examines student performance; it accepts objective evaluation from outside professionals trained by WASC; it maintains a qualified faculty; it regularly assesses the quality of its educational programs; and it plans for the future.

The WASC Accrediting Commission for Schools website ([www.acswasc.org](http://www.acswasc.org)) lists the following reasons why your school should be accredited. Accreditation

- certifies to the public that the school is a trustworthy institution of learning;
- validates the integrity of a school's program and student transcripts;
- assures the school community that the school purposes are appropriate and being accomplished through a viable educational program;
- provides a method to manage change through regular assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring, and reassessment; and
- assists the school in establishing its priority areas for improvement.

There are several additional, compelling reasons why schools, particularly California high schools, should seek and maintain WASC accreditation. In November 2002, the University of California adopted a policy that requires all high schools that want UC approval of their courses to meet UC's "a through g" requirements to be accredited by WASC, or to be a candidate for WASC accreditation. Schools must comply with this policy no later than June 2006. Accreditation is also required for Pell Grant and Cal Grant eligibility, and military recruiters expect applicants to be from accredited schools. Teachers do not receive credit for years during which they taught at a non-accredited school, schools and districts recruiting new teachers consult WASC about applicants' prior schools of employment, and finally, many school districts have policies to accept transfer credits only from schools accredited by WASC or another regional accreditation association that has a reciprocal agreement with WASC.

WASC provides a valuable service to the public by assuring accredited schools are extensively evaluated and conform to general expectations of performance and quality. You can find out if your school is accredited by searching the WASC Directory at [www.acswasc.org](http://www.acswasc.org). The best way to obtain information about your school's accreditation report is to ask your school principal. And if your school is contemplating an accreditation review, remember that stakeholder involvement, especially parent involvement, is an important criterion for accreditation.

In the next issue of *PTA in California*: "Frequently Asked Questions about WASC and School Accreditation." Please send any questions you may have about WASC or about school accreditation to [info@capta.org](mailto:info@capta.org).

*Education Commission*

## Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrian injuries are the second leading cause of accidental deaths among children ages 5 to 14 years old. Most children under the age of 10 can't deal safely with traffic. Children cannot judge speed or distance. They are easily distracted. Most children assume that if they can see a car that means a person in a car can see them.

Most children are struck in streets or driveways near their home by running in between parked cars, walking on the edge of the road or sidewalk or by darting into the street to get a ball. Here are some helpful tips:

- Always hold a younger child's hand when you cross or are near a street.

- Never let your child run ahead of you.
- Always walk with your child on the inside of the sidewalk and walk facing the traffic.
- Cross only at corners using the crosswalks and signals.
- Teach your child to look left, right, and left again.
- Continue to look both ways while crossing.
- Don't assume the driver sees you.

For more information contact the National Safe Kids Campaign® at [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)

*Community Concerns Commission*

## Working Together to Promote Healthy Lifestyles



As children across the country are returning to classrooms, good nutrition is something to work into home and school routines. Like parent involvement, good nutrition has a direct link to a child's academic success.

It's easy to promote healthy lifestyles for children when schools, parents, and communities work together. The new *Healthy Lifestyles at Home and at School* notebook in your back to school kit, produced exclusively for PTAs, has several simple ways that communities can work together. They include:

**Schools:** Promote healthy foods in the cafeteria. Encourage the elimination of sugary, non-nutritious foods in vending machines and at school events. Rescue recess and strive for opportunities for students to engage in physical activities during the school day.

**Parents:** Begin by being positive role models for children by improving their own eating and exercise habits. Offer repeated opportunities for children to try healthy foods and cut down on the number of fast food meals that are eaten each week. Work physical activities into family routines such as a nature hike, bike ride, or morning jog.

**Communities:** Ask stores to make fresh fruits and vegetables available for sale. See that parks and recreation centers are a safe and vital part of the community. Be sure recreational facilities are accessible to everyone, open at convenient hours and are affordable for all families. Organize physically active community events such as sporting events and community walks.

As a PTA leader, begin promoting healthy lifestyles in your everyday living and serve as an example for everyone in your state. Be mindful of foods and beverages served at your PTA events and find good alternatives to high calorie, high fat product sales. Taking care of ourselves is the first step to taking care of our children.

*Anna M. Weselak*  
*National PTA President*

**NO76**  
PROTECT SCHOOLS, HEALTH CARE & PUBLIC SAFETY

## The LegiSchool Project Marks Its 10th Year

Last spring, the LegiSchool Project marked its 10th year of providing award-winning civic education opportunities to California's young people and educators. The LegiSchool Project is a civic education collaboration between California State University, Sacramento, and the California State Legislature, administered by the Center for California Studies. The Project's mission is to engage California high school students in matters of public policy and state government by creating opportunities for students and state leaders to meet and share ideas on the issues affecting Californians and by developing free government-oriented curriculum materials to help enhance the quality of state government-related curriculum in schools. LegiSchool and its partner the California Channel produce and distribute videos related to fundamental operations of state government. The latest production is *A Day in the Life of a Lobbyist*, an insightful examination of California's third "house."

Reaching out to thousands of young people each year, The LegiSchool Project's mission is to motivate young people to take an interest in the public life around them and to encourage their active participation in our political process. The Project creates learning opportunities for students by providing students the opportunity to meet with state leaders in the Legislature. During these 10 years, LegiSchool has produced more than 40 meetings at the State Capitol, addressing a wide variety of teen-oriented public policies.

The Legislative Real World Civics Summer Internship is a four week program for Sacramento County students which, with the assistance of Capital Fellows, allows students to spend time in the Legislative and Executive branches.

For more information about LegiSchool events and curriculum materials, please contact the LegiSchool Project at (916) 278-6906, via email at [legischool@csus.edu](mailto:legischool@csus.edu) or visit the LegiSchool website at [www.csus.edu/legischool](http://www.csus.edu/legischool).

### 2005-2006 LegiSchool Calendar of Events

All meetings will take place at the State Capitol.

#### December 1, 2005

*Are California's High Schools Succeeding?* — High drop out rates, low test scores, overcrowded classrooms and young people ill-prepared for college and/or work are just some of the concerns being voiced about the state of California's public high schools. Policy makers and school officials are grappling with reform through initiatives such as the High School Exit Exam, increasing access to AP courses, and the creation of "small learning communities" designed to provide a more personal learning experience. Many California schools have adopted approaches that are geared towards work force preparation in careers such as health care, criminal justice, business and science. Is your school doing a good job at preparing its students for life beyond high school? Have any of the reform efforts mentioned above been implemented at your school? If so, how successful have those efforts been? *Following the Town Hall Meeting, this discussion will continue in the form of a statewide online dialogue with students, educators and policy-makers. Anyone who has internet access will be able to participate in this exciting and innovative deliberation.*

#### February 9, 2006

*Students' Rights vs. Parents' Rights* — Debate is growing over parental consent issues for teens who seek medical care during school hours. Some argue that young people have the right to privacy when it comes to their own health care, while others argue that the right of parents to know what sort of medical care their children are seeking supersedes a minor's right to privacy. Do schools have the right and/or responsibility to notify parents when

their child is seeking health care during school hours? Do parents have the right to know what sort of medical care their child is getting? As a society, where do we draw the line between minors' rights and parental rights?

#### April 6, 2006

*Teens and Driving: Changing the Rules of the Road* — Recently enacted laws and current state legislation aim to make California roads safer by cracking down on inexperienced teenage drivers. From restrictions on cell phone use while driving to earlier curfews for young drivers to limitations on transporting passengers without adult supervision, lawmakers are responding to statistical data on accidents caused by teen drivers and increasing public concern over the safety of young people in the driver's seat. How effective would such measures be at improving the safety of our roads? Are young people being unfairly targeted? What is the best approach to teaching new drivers to be safe behind the wheel? *This meeting is part of LegiSchool's annual Student Legislative Summit and participants will be selected from LegiSchool's essay contest.*

Legislation Team

### Two Exciting Special Activities for the 2006 Convention

Are you coming to convention in Anaheim on May 10-13, 2006? Look what we have planned!

#### Disneyland Night - May 12, 2006

Disneyland® and Disney's California Adventure® are located in Anaheim, just across the street from the Anaheim Convention Center and the Hilton Anaheim Hotel. We have adjusted our convention schedule so that convention attendees can enjoy all the pleasures that Disney offers on the evening of Friday, May 12, 2006.

This is also a great opportunity for convention attendees to make arrangements for their families to join them in Anaheim. Disneyland® will offer convention attendees special family discount rates that will be in effect for one week prior to and one week after convention ends.

Guests of our official convention headquarters hotel, the Hilton Anaheim Hotel, may also take advantage of the special convention room rates for those that wish to bring their families to Anaheim.

#### Healthy Lifestyles in Action Walk - May 13, 2006

Join California State PTA's first annual Healthy Lifestyles in Action Walk. California State PTA has planned a special walk to help demonstrate our commitment to healthy living and the healthy living programs that PTAs provide for their communities. The walk will be held on Saturday, May 13, 2006, from 6:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

The cost for each participant will be \$20.00 which includes a T-shirt. Proceeds will cover the cost of the event and the remainder will be placed in a grant fund to be administered by the California State PTA Scholarship and Grant Committee. Grant monies will be available for PTAs to use specifically for health and wellness education. If the walk is successful grants will be available in fiscal year 2006-2007 through the scholarship and grant application process.

Look for more information about purchasing Disneyland® tickets, staying at the Hilton Anaheim Hotel, and participating in our first annual Healthy Lifestyles in Action Walk in the California State PTA Registration Book in November.

Convention Commission

## Obtaining Grants

Grants are specific funds given to an organization to perform specific functions. PTA districts, councils, and units may apply for grants to help fund many of their projects and programs. Businesses, foundations and corporations give grants to causes they consider worthwhile. When applying for grants, PTAs may want to stress the points that public schools produce future employees and that donations or gifts are tax deductible, as PTA is a 501(c)(3) organization. Organizations like the American Cancer Society, March of Dimes, Kiwanis, and Lions Clubs will make funds available for projects that fulfill their goals, such as programs addressing child abuse or substance abuse prevention.

The project for which a PTA is seeking grant funds must be one that promotes the Purposes of the PTA, is relevant to the PTA's goals, and has been approved by a vote of the membership. PTA members must be committed to following through with the stated goals of the program. The project should be one that will not commit the participation of succeeding PTA boards.

If the PTA is serious about seeking grants, find someone with expertise in writing grant proposals. The local school district may have a qualified staff member. Seek the guidance of people who are knowledgeable about the intricacies of writing proposals.

The first step is to gather information about possible sources of funding. These include the federal and state governments, private foundations, community foundations, private individuals, and public sector funds such as United Way. PTA districts, councils, and units may apply for grants in order to fund many of their projects and programs.

### GRANT WRITING

A grant writing chairman can be appointed by the president to coordinate PTA grant writing efforts. When a PTA is interested in applying for outside funds to help implement a PTA project, a committee should be appointed by the president to look for sources of funding and to prepare the proposal.

### GRANT REQUEST PROCESS

Contact the grant source in writing with a brief letter of intent explaining the project.

Request the grant specifications from the funder and follow them carefully.

Find out who is responsible for reviewing grants and send the proposal to that person.

Follow up with a phone call if the donor has not responded within six to eight weeks.

Seek a personal meeting to explain the PTA's proposal further. Be open to ques-

tions. Be succinct. If the proposal is not funded, ask why.

Recommend revisions for future proposals.

Accept the final decision graciously. Always properly acknowledge the funder's generosity when the request is funded.

### PROPOSALS

When writing the proposal, provide detailed information about the proposed project. Most grant proposals have a distinct format, but the information sought by funders is often the same:

- An introduction that describes the PTA organization and its purpose;
- An overview of the project and its specific goals;
- A statement that defines the problem the project seeks to solve;
- Statistics that substantiate problem identification;
- The target population;
- The project's value to PTA and to the school community;
- The proposed outcomes of the project.
- An explanation of the activities the grant will fund;
- A timeline for completion of the project;
- A description of how the project will be evaluated; and
- A proposed project budget that includes both expenses and in-kind services.

The grant writing chairman or committee should maintain a file of completed applications, individuals who are resources, and possible sources of funds to assist future committees. If the grant is awarded, the grant writing chairman is responsible for complying with the donor's reporting requirements, including providing the unit's IRS Employer Identification Number (EIN). A PTA may furnish a donor with an EIN if requested.

The treasurer must track all expenditures carefully; this information is a requirement in all grant funder reports. Keep the association aware of the progress of the grant application process, and use the reports submitted to the funder to inform the association of the project's implementation progress.

All action taken on grant applications or project implementation must be recorded in the PTA minutes.

From Finance Section - [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org)

*Finance Commission*

## Bullying

Bullying is physical or psychological intimidation that occurs repeatedly and creates a pattern of harassment and abuse. Bullying includes teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, and spreading rumors. A new trend of bullying is happening on computers. It is known as "cyber bullying" which involves sending demeaning or humiliating messages via email or instant messages.

Bullies are typically bigger, older, stronger or more popular than their victims. They enjoy the distress and hurt they cause their victims because it makes them feel strong and powerful.

Children who are bullied most often keep it to themselves because they are afraid, ashamed and fear retaliation. Here are some signs to look for:

- Arrives home with bruises, cuts, scratches, torn clothes, missing or damaged books
- Loss of appetite
- Increase in visits to school nurse
- Frequent headaches/stomachaches before school
- Afraid to go to school
- Feels lonely
- Becomes withdrawn when asked how their day went
- Eats more after school (because lunch or lunch money taken)

You can help your child handle bullies by:

- Encouraging them to share information about school
- Teaching them to be assertive rather than aggressive
- Teaching them to walk away and get help from an adult

If your child is a victim of bullying at school make sure to inform school officials immediately. Also keep written records of names, dates, times and circumstances. Give a copy to your principal. It is very important to respond to your child's fears and concerns with love, patience and support.

*Community Concerns Commission*

**Remember  
to vote on  
November 8**

## — Bylaws Are Your Friend — Part 2

In the first part of this two-part series, Articles I - VI were discussed and the wealth of information that is readily available to you in the new *friendly* bylaws.

**Article VII** could be retitled, “*Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Association Meetings but Didn’t Know Where to Look.*” Literally everything you need to know about your association (AKA “general”) meetings is contained here: day of the week and months of your meetings; which meeting is your election meeting; the budgets, programs and projects which must be approved by your membership; the requirements for calling a special meeting (and there are a few); the quorum required for your meeting; who can make motions, debate and vote; and how often to meet. Finally, this article discusses proxy voting, which is never allowed.

**Article VIII** is full of information about your executive board: who is included on the board, what the board does, how the board authorizes payments, what committees it can create, and how to fill board vacancies. Members of the executive board may not serve as paid employees of or under contract to the association (conflict of interest). If a special meeting of the executive board is needed, you will find how to do this in Article VIII. Finally, you will find how to legally remove from office a non-attending executive board member or one whose conduct is deemed to be injurious to the organization. “Due process” is fully outlined and must be followed in this case.

**Article IX** covers committees. Some of the vital knowledge to be gleaned from this section includes how to form committees, how long the committees serve, how to make and file committee reports, and due process for committee chairmen.

**Article X** covers council PTA membership. It states the council to which you belong (if you are in council), the amount of council per capita dues and when they are to be paid, and who will represent your PTA at meetings of the council.

**Article XI** details the charter procedure for all local PTAs organized under the authority of the California State PTA, conformity to rules and regulations, and the relationship to National PTA. You will find the requirements of a “unit in good standing” in this article.

**Article XII** explains your PTA’s relationship with National PTA and California State PTA and that your bylaws must not conflict with either National PTA or California State PTA.

**Article XIII** is the articles of organization.

**Article XIV** states the start and end of your fiscal year and the identification numbers for both California State PTA and National PTA. These numbers are essential for filing taxes and other purposes.

**Article XV** states our parliamentary authority which is Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised. Parliamentary authority is mandatory for any organization seeking proper meeting procedures.

**Article XVI** outlines the amendment procedure for your bylaws.

The *California State PTA Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units* play an essential role in the PTA organization. Open your copy and start learning!

*Bylaws Committee*

“There are two primary choices in life: to accept conditions as they exist, or accept the responsibility for changing them.”

*Denis Waitley, Author and Speaker*

### **Building a successful PTA team is one of the most important things you can do to strengthen your PTA**

**PTA LEADERS ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PTA TEAM WHEN THEY ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

- What are we here to do?
- How shall we organize ourselves?
- Who is in charge?
- Who cares about our success?
- How do we work through problems?
- How do we fit in with other groups?
- What benefits do team members need from the team?

#### **MOTIVATING A PTA TEAM**

- Remember that people give other people power over them
- Strive to secure “power with” people, not for “power over” them
- Make the other person feel important
- Use tact and courtesy and respect feelings
- Keep an open mind but know what is important
- Learn to listen for the what and the why
- Give praise for accomplishment; be encouraging
- Be a real person first; then assume your other roles
- Treat people the way you would like them to treat you
- How you behave toward people will be determined by how you view them. This will determine how they view you and how they behave toward you.

#### **A SUCCESSFUL PTA TEAM IS:**

An energetic group of people, who are committed to achieving common objectives, who work well together and enjoy doing so, and who produce high quality, planned results.

*Leadership Services Commission*

## **A Successful Reflections Program** *“I Wonder Why...”*

The National PTA Reflections Program for 2005-2006 is a perfect opportunity for your PTA to celebrate the arts and encourage arts participation. As stated so well in National PTA’s Reflections Program Newsletter, “Our theme this year, “*I Wonder Why...*,” will give students an opportunity to ask the question, search within, and finally, create. What a wonderful opportunity for self expression!” Here are some basic ways to get your program up and running.

Most importantly, be sure to set your due dates to coincide with your council and/or district turn-in dates. Send out letters to students, parents, and teachers explaining the program and the importance of the arts in children’s education. Put up posters about the program, where to obtain information, and turn-in dates. Be specific about the rules of the program, especially how the students are to use their own imagination to create a piece of art that fits the theme. Recruit judges from colleges, art agencies, local photographers, bookstores and libraries, and elsewhere in your community. Promote the Reflections Art Program in local newspapers and community venues. Above all else, recognize each and every student who participates, at every level. Hold receptions in the school or community library, activity room, school district office, or any other public place with all of the students’ works on display.

The Reflections Program *Rules and Information Packet* is available on our California State PTA website at <http://www.capta.org/sections/programs/reflections.cfm>. The packet was also distributed to every California unit president in the service mailing in August.

*Member Services Commission*

## How School Nurses Enhance Student Achievement

School nurses help improve student's academic performance by identifying health barriers to education, and eliminating or modifying them; thereby maximizing a student's educational potential. School nurses strengthen and facilitate the educational process by improving and protecting the health status of children.

Who is the school nurse?

- A California Registered Nurse (RN)
- Has a Baccalaureate Degree (BA or BS)
- Has a California School Nurse Credential

The school nurse responsibilities include:

- **Identifying health defects** that are barriers to education and finding resources for parents to assist in resolving these defects (i.e., dental, vision or hearing problems)
- **Providing Health Assessments:** Every student with special needs has a review of their health status. The school nurse, along with the family and student's physician, finds the best way to accommodate the student's needs during the school day.
- **Overseeing Communicable Disease Control:** Management of illnesses that can be transmitted from pupil to pupil, checking immunization levels and updating at clinics.
- **Providing State mandated health screenings:** Every child that is new to the schools is checked for vision problems, hearing, and, often, dental. California requires that every elementary school child receive a vision screening test in kindergarten, or any first entrance to school, including color vision for boys, second/third grade, fifth grade, seventh or eighth and tenth grade and referrals from parents or teachers.
- **Providing Sports Physicals:** All athletes will have a physical exam to assure that they are in good health for playing sports.
- **Providing Scoliosis Screening:** All 7th grade girls and 8th grade boys will be screened for scoliosis. The school nurse will consider a total health assessment of the particular grade level being screened.
- **Taking charge of Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP):** Students are required to have a physical examination after entering first grade. This exam will identify special health concerns (diabetes, obesity, nutritional needs, health concerns).
- **Notifying Parents/guardians:** Notification of all health defects identified by school personnel must be sent to parents/guardians and teachers. Parents/guardians should be referred to their private physician, or to their local health care facility.
- **Training and supervising unlicensed personnel to provide specialized physical health care services under supervision of the school nurse:** Students requiring special procedures, such as asthma emergencies, allergic reactions, diabetic emergencies, medications for seizures and many others.
- **Overseeing First Aid and disaster preparedness:** All school nurses, by education and experience, know how to respond to emergency situations.
- Reporting child abuse and suicide risk assessment
- Serving as a member of a multidisciplinary team to meet health and educational needs of all students. Advocates, protects and speaks for the student's health needs.

The fact that 50% of our school districts do not have school nurses means that many PTAs in our state have work to do. At the 2005 convention delegates adopted a resolution.

This resolution is a call to action for PTAs to:

- Inform everyone in your school and community about the lack of credentialed school nurses.
- Assess and determine the health and safety needs of students in your communities and determine the number of credentialed school nurses needed to safely and effectively provide the care for students.
- Work with your local school districts to ensure that policies are enacted to provide appropriate health and prevention services by a credentialed school nurse.
- Work with policy makers, public health agencies and local school district to ensure that adequate funding is available to provide appropriate health services by a credentialed school nurse.

If you have had success in keeping or acquiring school nurses in your district please share with us at [health@capta.org](mailto:health@capta.org). This information can be provided to those districts who do not have school nurses.

*With thanks to Dee Apodaca, President, California School Nurses Organization, who contributed to this article.  
Health Commission*

## Does Your PTA Look Like Your Community?

In PTA, our goal is to be as inclusive as possible. Ideally every PTA would reflect the diversity of the community it serves. The *California State PTA Toolkit* states, "Outreach is PTA's commitment to include the *entire* community in all phases of PTA programs and activities. It is of such importance that it must be given top priority when planning PTA activities." How do you accomplish this? Consider the following ideas:

- **Identify those in your community who are not represented.**

Consider the various ethnic and cultural communities, the student leadership, people with disabilities, community businesses and organizations as well as less "visible" variations such as grandparents, single parents, alumni or their families.

- **Survey the entire community to get their input—what interests them?**

The commonality we all share is the children and the school. What do they want to know? What are their concerns? Provide opportunities to learn about others.

- **Find out what might keep them from being involved.**

Are meetings at convenient times, avoiding religious holidays? In places accessible to all? Does everyone feel invited and accepted? Is translation provided if needed?

**Successful events and publicity are two good strategies for improving outreach efforts.**

Provide programs and information in which your community has expressed interest. Distribute materials and notices about events in an effective way—consider language and methods. Make sure everyone feels welcomed when they do attend. Use every opportunity to publicize what your PTA is doing and what PTA as an organization is doing. Read more about "Tips for Promoting Your PTA" and "Creating a Public Relations Campaign" in section 6 of the *California State PTA Toolkit*.

**Always evaluate each activity and your efforts.**

Did people attend? Were people interested? Will they come again? Will they bring others? Was it a success? What made it a success? If it wasn't as successful as you had hoped, what could have been done differently? How could you reach even more people?

**Outreach should be a top priority for every PTA.** If your PTA does not have an outreach committee or an outreach plan, consider making outreach a goal for this school year. Our commitment to outreach requires that every PTA make an effort to expand their membership by reaching out to include and welcome everyone.

*Membership Committee*



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

*Reaffirmed 2004*

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