

PTA[®] in California

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— Continue the Vision, Celebrate FOUNDERS DAY, February 17th —

Founders Day is a perfect time to renew the dedication to the Purposes of the PTA that were defined by PTA's founders more than a century ago. Each year in February, PTA honors the three founders as well as past and present PTA leaders. Through special programs and events, PTA also attempts to increase the awareness of its members and the community by highlighting achievements, activities, projects and goals.

The Founders Day celebration was created in 1910 by Mrs. David O. Mears, a charter member of the National Congress of Mothers founded by Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst in Washington, D.C., February 17, 1897. The Founders Day observance has continued through the change of organization names in 1925 to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the uniting in 1970 with the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, founded in 1926 by Selena Sloan Butler, to become the National PTA (see A Brief History: Working Together for Children Since 1987, *California State PTA Toolkit*, section 1.1.6, page 4).

Issues concerning immigrants, homeless children and families, the unemployed and education, and numerous health and safety concerns still need attention. However, through PTA advocacy to enact and enforce laws, children's health is better protected and children are better fed, housed and educated, with parents more involved in their upbringing. The vision of PTA's founders has been realized in many

ways, and now it is up to present PTA members to continue the vision.

The Founders Day Freewill Offering – "PTA Birthday Gift"

Donations collected during Founders Day observances benefit the entire organization: unit, council, district PTAs, State and National PTA. California State PTA returns one-fourth of its offering to the district PTA and retains one fourth for its work throughout the state. Half of the offering is sent to National PTA (see *California State PTA Toolkit*, section 7.14, and the Unit Remittance Form, Forms section, page 425).

What To Do

- Collect and review Founders Day material. Make copies as needed from resources including the procedure book from the previous chairman or committee (start a procedure book if your unit does not have one), the Founders Day information in the *California State PTA Toolkit*, and the unit historian book.
- Select a theme with Founders Day as the major focus, and decide on the type of program (family dinner, musical program, etc.).
- Plan an innovative way to reach out to your community. Invite guests from your school families, past and present PTA presidents, leaders and award recipients as well as school district and community members. Use an updated contact list from past events as a resource.
- Devise an interesting way to collect the Founders Day freewill offering during

the event, unless the unit chooses to budget a donation to be sent directly through channels. If so, be sure to announce this at the event, including the explanation of the purpose for the donation. The Founders Day freewill offering is divided and shared with all levels of PTA, with one-fourth of it being returned to the districts. The funds help organize and strengthen PTAs, and train its leaders.

FOUNDERS DAY observance may also be the occasion to present PTA awards such as Honorary Service Award, Continuing Service Award, Golden Oak Service Award or Very Special Person Award. If so, a committee should select recipients following the recommendations found in the *California State PTA Toolkit*, and send for the appropriate awards at least six weeks prior to the event. Order forms are in the *California State PTA Toolkit*.

For more information on what your PTA can do all year, and for more program ideas involving students, the entire school and its families, check our website at www.capta.org.

Member Services Commission

— Proposition 76 Defeated by PTA Grass Roots —

In November, California voters soundly rejected Proposition 76, a ballot initiative that would have attacked constitutional minimum school funding, granting sweeping new powers to the governor. Proposition 76 would have changed California's budget priorities and placed education behind transportation and local government with respect to constitutional spending guarantees.

California State PTA members worked hard to defeat Proposition 76.

Now that budget time is here again, let us not be complacent in our victory. The struggle is not over. We must continue to reinforce the commitment to our children and the fulfillment of the promise made to protect minimum funding for education.

Legislation Team

Convention Registration

We invite all PTA members to join us for the 107th Annual California State PTA Convention on May 10-13, 2006 at the Anaheim Convention Center and Hilton Anaheim Hotel.

Complete directions for convention registration are included in the Registration Book mailed to PTA presidents in December 2005 and is also available online at www.capta.org under "Convention."

To qualify for early registration fees, all required materials and monies should be forwarded through council/district PTA by their published due dates to arrive at the California State PTA office no later than January 31, 2006.

Convention Commission



Are We Your Mother's PTA?

After discussing the various advocacy positions that the California State PTA pursues on issues that concern children and youth during a newspaper interview, the reporter remarked, "Well, I guess you're not my mother's PTA." Has the organization changed?

Why are we viewed as changing? Have we lost our focus on the reasons a group of concerned friends called a meeting in Washington, D.C. on February 17, 1897?

Those founders of the National Congress of Mothers, Phoebe Apperson Hearst and Alice McLellan Birney, called for action with a commitment to children. As a part of her welcoming remarks at that first meeting, Mrs. Birney appealed "to all mankind and to all womankind, regardless of race, color, or condition, to recognize that the republic's greatest work is to save the children." The full commitment of that appeal was further emphasized in 1970 when the National Congress of Parents and Teachers merged with the National Congress of Colored Parents, founded by Selena Sloan Butler, to form the National PTA.

The concerns for children and youth are embedded into the Purposes of the organization and are:

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community and place of worship
- To raise the standards of home life
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth
- To develop between educators and the general public such unified efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

The perception among most people when asked about the PTA is that we are the room parents, the fundraisers, the cookie-bakers, the escorts for field trips. These are important contributions at any school site and are not to be undervalued. However, we also speak out on issues that relate to the safety of those students as they travel to and from the school with a local PTA often being the voice that takes safety issues to the attention of local elected officials. We take positions on pending legislation and ballot measures based on the organization's position statements and resolutions, as adopted after thorough study by the organization's elected representatives at the State Board or by adoption at an annual convention by the delegates. We encourage our members to attend meetings with governmental departments and agencies from the local school boards to the State Capitol in Sacramento and to serve as volunteer advisers to these and other allied groups.

Perhaps that young reporter had warm memories of his mother volunteering in the classroom and going on field trips. Perhaps he was totally unaware of the letters she wrote to elected officials urging that the welfare of children and youth always be in the forefront or of her volunteer time spent serving on advisory committees.

Are we changing as an organization? We are constantly learning and growing, but our focus continues to remain on working to benefit the health, safety, education and general welfare of all children. Are we our mother's PTA? You betcha!

Brenda Davis
California State PTA President

Principles of Adult Learning for PTA Leaders and Presenters

As PTA leaders, we frequently have to give presentations. But did you realize that one of the most important pieces of a successful presentation is to know and respect your audience? You might have the best-prepared audiovisuals and speech but if you don't know your audience, your presentation will suffer.

PTA presentations are generally directed to adults, so it is worthwhile to consider how adults learn and how best to engage them. Malcolm Knowles, a pioneer in the field of adult learning, identified several characteristics of adult learners. These include the following:

1. *Adults need to be self-directed.* As people mature their ideas about themselves change from being dependent towards being self-directed human beings.
2. *Adults have accumulated life experiences* and knowledge from various roles as workers, parents and responsible members of their families and communities.
3. *Adults are goal-oriented.* Adults are ready to learn and look forward to developing their skills and knowledge base.
4. *Adults must see a reason for learning* and expect to be able to use their new knowledge to solve immediate problems.
5. *Adults are practical* and want to know how this new knowledge will help them in their work. For mature adults, the motivation to learn is internal.
6. *Adults, as all learners, need to be shown respect.* They should be treated as equals in knowledge and life skills.

Use this information and when you give a presentation always remember that in knowing your adult audience, your goals are to:

- Create an atmosphere of equality with your audience members.
- Foster a class community.
- Encourage participants to learn in a variety of ways that reflect their varied life experiences.
- Encourage participants to keep their goals in mind and to remember their purpose in coming to the presentation.

More information is available at:

honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/adults-2.htm

Leadership Services Commission



Finance Reminders

Here are some important Do's and Don'ts to remember concerning PTA finances:

- When presenting a report at a meeting, the treasurer should be prepared to answer all questions promptly and to have records available.
- Association funds should not be deposited in the personal account of the treasurer, nor should they be deposited in any school/school district account.
- Two PTA board members must always count the money and both should sign a receipt verifying the amount. All monies collected should be given to the treasurer without delay and deposited into the PTA bank account. The treasurer should issue a receipt for all funds received.
- The treasurer pays by check – never by cash – all bills as authorized. As a general rule, purchases should not be made without written authorization.
- Never sign a blank check.
- Submit all check requests (authorizations for payment), receipts, bank statements, cancelled checks, association approved budget, financial reports and both executive board minutes and association meeting minutes to the auditor for the semiannual audit.

Finance Commission

College Hazing and Abuse

Chuck Stevens died from alcohol poisoning after drinking a pint of whiskey, a six-pack of beer and a bottle of wine. After he passed out his fraternity brothers plopped Chuck on a bed.

Matthew Carrington died after drinking excess amounts of water and doing exercises. His death was triggered by hyponatremia, a condition in which excess water in the body causes sodium levels in the blood to drop. Water is then absorbed into the blood and fluids build up in the brain.

William E. Flowers, Jr. died of asphyxiation after he was asked, along with 4 other pledges, to dig graves on a sandy beach. They then had to lie down in the graves while fraternity members threw sand on top of them. Williams's grave collapsed and he inhaled too much sand.

Every year we hear stories in the news regarding student deaths from a hazing-related activity. College hazing has been around for many years. While some colleges discourage the practice, other colleges, believing it builds school loyalty and helps assimilate students to school life, ignore the practice.

Attitudes haven't changed much over the years. Far too many college administrations turn a blind eye to fraternity and sorority hazing. Students in these organizations show great school spirit and alumni contribute large sums of money to the college.

It was not until the 1970's that hazing deaths could no longer be considered isolated incidents and colleges started to address the issue. There are now anti-hazing laws in 42 out of 50 states, but while laws exist, they are not always effective. Hazing still occurs on a regular basis on college campuses. One reason for this is that there is a "Code of Silence; getting students to talk about hazing is difficult. This code is often hard to understand for anyone who is not a member but it is taken quite seriously by the people involved. Breaking this code can lead to retaliation of varying degrees. Also, once students have survived

hazing, they want new pledges to have to go through what they went through, to be as scared and embarrassed as they were.

Teachers and administrators are part of this "Code of Silence." They see students in their classrooms with bruises or in strange clothes and say nothing when the students walk in a few weeks later as a member of a fraternity or sorority.

While hazing is often thought of as a college problem, it is actually more wide spread. Hazing is a social problem. There are documented incidents of hazing with athletic teams, professional schools, religious organizations, school clubs, and the military. People involved in hazing often say that it builds a sense of community, unity, a feeling of belonging, and it's a long-standing tradition for developing loyalty. Hazing activities are about having power and control over others. It is about degrading and humiliating another human being.

One disturbing trend is the increase in hazing activities on high school and middle school campuses. Many college athletes say they were first hazed in high school. High school hazing has included sexual and physical assaults. Students who strive to show individuality in high school often find themselves targeted for hazing activities. A study conducted by Alfred University in 2000 showed that 1.5 million high school students are hazed each year but never report it.

As adults, we need to open our eyes to this problem. We must ask ourselves if this is a life skill we want our children to learn. Belonging to a team or organization can be important, but not if it involves humiliating or degrading another human being. We should want our children to grow and develop into caring, mature adults. Teaching our children to have character and dignity should be one of our highest priorities. Neither is accomplished through hazing rituals.

Community Concerns Commission

PTA Visits the "Kids of Katrina"



During my visits to PTAs across the country, I am always asked how the schools that were affected by Hurricane Katrina are doing. I am pleased to share with you my firsthand experience with the resilient folks who were affected by the hurricane.

In early November, I joined National PTA and Mississippi PTA leaders in visiting children, schools, and PTA members in Biloxi, Gulfport, and Jackson, Mississippi. We were warmly welcomed in every school by members of our PTA family who appreciated knowing that PTA members from across the country are concerned about them.

We delivered more than 3,000 of the 30,000 art kits donated by Rack Room Shoes to the Mississippi Department of Education's Katrina Recovery Program. During our school visits, we saw children smile and principals, teachers, and parents fill with emotion. Children, teachers, principals, superintendents, and state legislators cheered the efforts of PTA and Rack Room Shoes.

We also presented Anniston Avenue Elementary School PTA in Gulfport with National PTA's first \$5,000 Disaster Relief Grant. They plan to use the grant to help rebuild their school's library.

We continue to do everything we can to help children, families, schools, and members of our PTA family rebuild and heal. We are grateful to Office Depot, Rack Room Shoes, and those who have adopted a PTA or made generous contributions to the "Kids of Katrina" fund. It's safe to say that your contributions will be appreciated for a long time to come.

*Anna M. Weselak
National PTA President*

Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grant Recipients

The Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grant is funded by an endowment established by the family of Mary Lou Anderson, founder of the Reflections Program.

Emerald Middle School PTA in El Cajon, CA was awarded \$825 to bring Border Voices, a local non-profit program to middle school English classes. The program sends trained, certified professional Poet-Teachers into the classroom to conduct workshops on creative writing. Congratulations!

MY PTA/PTSA Awards

The deadline for applications for the California State PTA's "MY PTA/PTSA" Award program is fast approaching! All applications must have gone "through channels" and be in the California State PTA office on February 1, 2006 for consideration. Additionally, each unit must have qualified for the California State PTA "Chairman's Club" (a minimum of 50 members by November 15, 2005).

Many, many units throughout California are engaged in creative, exciting and educational program for children, staff, parents and their communities. Share the news and be recognized!

With one application, units and councils have the opportunity to submit for just one or all of the listed categories, as well as request to be considered for Outstanding Unit or Council. The categories are: Membership Creativity, Your Outreach, Parent Involvement, Teachers, Administrators & Staff Involvement, Student Involvement and Allied Agencies/Community Partners Involvement or Advocacy Efforts.

To learn more about this awards program and to receive an application, look in the California PTA Toolkit, pages 272 and 399, or log onto the California State PTA website at www.capta.org.

Member Services Commission

Handling Unbudgeted Funds

Many PTAs are unnecessarily placing their organization and individual executive board members at risk by giving the executive board a great deal of latitude in spending funds without the association's prior approval. PTAs do this by authorizing the executive board in the bylaws to spend large amounts of unbudgeted funds between association meetings (see *Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units*, Article VIII, Section 2c; and *Council Bylaws*, Article IX, Section 2c). This section of the bylaws is intended to be used for emergency expenses only, not as a way to fund ongoing or new programs without the members' prior approval.

The executive board has a fiduciary responsibility to disclose to all members of the association all plans for expenditures and to secure the association's approval prior to incurring expenses. Members have the right and the fiduciary responsibility to ask questions and approve only expenditures that meet the PTA's Purposes and goals. To ignore these responsibilities is to invite mismanagement or give up control of the PTA's hard-earned funds. In addition, individual executive board members can be held *personally liable* for all expenditures that are not approved or ratified by the membership.

All PTA associations must approve the year's programs and projects that are then funded by an approved budget. The budget must be presented to the association and approved at the first meeting of the year – *before* the PTA incurs expenses. When a PTA decides to undertake a new program or project that is not included in the budget, it is necessary to amend the budget at an association meeting to provide funding for the new program.

The current guidelines for a reasonable unbudgeted amount that the executive board may approve between association meetings are as follows:

- For units that meet eight to nine times during the school year: up to \$500
- For units that meet five to seven times during the school year: up to \$750
- For units that meet four or less times during the school year: up to \$1000

The more often the PTA association meets, the more opportunities there are for the budget to be amended to include new or unanticipated programs and expenses. The budget may be amended at any meeting with a 2/3 vote, providing the membership has been properly notified of the proposed action in accordance with Article VII, Section 1, *Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units* (Article VIII, Section 1, *Council Bylaws*).

What about those unbudgeted expenses that may come up over the summer? Remember, a budget should cover the entire fiscal year. The executive board-elect has the authority to meet following the election to begin planning for the next year (*Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units*, Article V, Section 10; and *Council Bylaws*, Article VI, Section 10). PTAs may approve a proposed budget prepared and presented by the executive board-elect at the last association meeting of the school year. The budget may then be ratified at the first association meeting of the following school year. Traditional and continuing expenses should be budgeted each year, regardless of what time of year they are incurred, and approval given for payment of budgeted summer bills at the last association meeting in the spring, as outlined in the *Toolkit*, section 5.2, The Budget and section 5.3.7a, Authorization Procedure. A motion must be made to release funds up to the budgeted amount. All expenses must be ratified at the next association meeting following the expenditure. Example "I move to release up to \$875.00 for the XZX activity, budget category: XZX activity." (*Toolkit*, section 5.3.7, Check Request System: Payment Authorization)

*Finance Commission
Bylaws Committee*

Your Questions About School Accreditation Answered

Note: This is the third and last article in a three-part series on school accreditation and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

Two articles that previously appeared in *PTA in California* addressed the purpose and scope of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. This final article on WASC's Accrediting Commission for Schools will answer some of the most frequently asked questions on K-12 school accreditation.

What is accreditation?

Accreditation is a voluntary school review process that shows a school is worthy of the trust placed in it to provide high quality learning opportunities, and that the school clearly demonstrates continual self-improvement. An accredited school is student oriented, continuously examines student performance, maintains a qualified faculty, plans for the future, and accepts objective evaluation from WASC-trained peer professionals.

Is there a connection between WASC and the California Department of Education (CDE), the federal government and other governmental agencies?

WASC is not a government agency. WASC does work collaboratively with state departments of education, the federal Department of Education, and the federal Department of State.

What types of schools does the WASC Accrediting Commission for Schools accredit?

The Accrediting Commission for Schools accredits 3,500 public, private, church-affiliated, and proprietary schools including elementary schools, junior high/middle/intermediate schools, comprehensive/college preparatory schools, continuation high schools, alternative education schools, charter schools, occupational/vocational high schools, regional occupational programs/centers, adult schools, and vocational skills centers. WASC is also piloting the accreditation of supplementary education programs and distance-learning schools on a case-by-case basis.

Does WASC provide the public with information about the schools it accredits?

The only information WASC publically releases about the schools it accredits is found in the WASC Directory. Since WASC is not a government agency, it is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Schools and school districts can release accreditation information about schools under their jurisdiction at their discretion.

How does a school become accredited?

A school that wishes to become accredited may apply for affiliation with WASC. Following an initial one or two day visit by a two-member WASC team, a report, including specific recommendations, is sent to the Accreditation Commission for Schools. If the Commission acts favorably on the application report, the school will be granted either candidacy or interim accreditation for a period of three years. The school will then undergo a full accreditation evaluation, and thereafter is periodically evaluated based on a six-year cycle.

Who can participate on an accreditation visiting team?

WASC maintains a database of professional educators who have a variety of public and private education expertise and are knowledgeable about education trends and issues. Visiting team members include classroom teachers, administrators, college professors, school board members, and retired educators.

Does WASC require that teachers and administrators in public and private schools be fully credentialed for the school to become accredited?

The Accrediting Commission for Schools requires that school personnel be qualified for the positions they hold, and that they meet any statutory or private school association requirements.

More in-depth responses to these questions, answers to additional questions, and more information about the WASC Accrediting Commission for Schools can be found at www.acswasc.org.

Education Commission

Giving Notice of Meetings

Your PTA is having an association meeting next month and there are many items on the agenda for the members' consideration. What obligation does the executive board, especially the president, have to ensure that this information is provided in advance to the members of your PTA? These requirements can be found in detail in the *Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units* (Article VII, Section 1), *Council Bylaws* (Article VIII, Section 1), and *District Bylaws* (Article IX, Section 1).

As a membership organization, it is the members who have the responsibility and authority to determine the program, budget and officers of the PTA. The program and budget include all programs, projects and expenditures of the PTA. Because all PTAs in California are constituent organizations of the California State PTA, a California corporation, all PTAs are governed by the California Corporations Code for the purposes of providing proper notice of meetings to members. The notice must include the following:

- date,
- time,
- place, and
- a list of all business that will be presented for action at the meeting.

The notice must be provided *in writing* to all voting members no less than 10 days and no more than 90 days before the date of the meeting. Notice may be given through flyers, newsletters, bulletin board postings, U.S. mail, e-mail, or web site posting; however, if the Internet is used, the notice should also be provided in another manner, as some members may not have access to computer-generated notices. Written notice may take many forms, but it must be provided in a manner that provides a

reasonable assurance that all voting members have received the notice.

Annual Election Meeting or Amending the Bylaws

At least 30 days prior written notice is required for the annual election meeting and any meeting where bylaws amendments will be considered. Bylaws amendments require the review and approval of the state parliamentarian before the 30 day notice may be delivered to the voting members. (See the last Article of bylaws and pages i-iii of bylaws for bylaws review and amendment adoption procedures.) The notice for the annual election meeting must include a proposed slate of officers for the members' consideration. Nominations must also be taken from the floor at the election meeting. (See *Bylaws* Article – Officers and Their Election.)

Additional Considerations

PTAs must have the required quorum at meetings in order to legally conduct business. The quorum for a meeting is established in the bylaws with the caution that "if this bylaw provision authorizes a quorum of less than one-third of the voting power, then only those matters the general nature of which was contained in the notice of the meeting may be voted upon at such meeting." This, too, is California Corporations Code. Since virtually all PTAs state a quorum of less than one-third of the voting power, all PTAs are bound by this additional requirement. Items of business which were not in the notice may NOT be acted upon at that particular meeting, but may be discussed and placed on the agenda for action at the next meeting.

Bylaws Committee

Preventing the Spread of Colds and Flu

State Superintendent Jack O'Connell released an audio public service announcement in November called "Wash Your Hands," designed to remind students and their families about the importance of hand washing to prevent the spread of colds and flu. The public service announcement is available as a compact disc or may be downloaded as a MP3 through the Department of Health Services website at www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/dcdc/izgroup/pdf/WashYourHandsPSA.mp3.

"By washing hands often, students can increase their chance of avoiding the flu, so they can stay healthy, stay in school, and keep learning," O'Connell said. "It is important to remind students about simple steps they can take to protect their health so schools will have fewer sick days for students and teachers."

Superintendent O'Connell reminded students about these tips to avoid spreading colds and flu:

- Wash your hands OFTEN with soap and water or hand sanitizer to help protect your-

self from germs and viruses. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

- When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, your sleeve, or your elbow.
- Stay fit by eating healthy foods, drinking plenty of water, exercising regularly, and getting plenty of rest.
- Keep up-to-date with other immunizations.
- If you become sick, stay home to avoid spreading germs to others.

The California Department of Education and the California Department of Health Services have developed a "Keep Our Schools Healthy" toolkit for schools to download at www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/dcdc/izgroup/flu.htm. There is a lot of credible information and links on this website for parents as well as schools.

There are also downloadable posters available in several different languages at www.cde.ca.gov/40595.

Health Commission

Peer Pressure

It Isn't Easy Being Me

All teenagers are constantly faced with decisions that are critical to their well-being. While pressure bombards them from many sources at this age, peer pressure is the major influence in their lives. This pressure often involves decisions about whether to use drugs and alcohol, become sexually active, or drop out of school. The decision-making skills that parents continually teach their child can now become the guiding factors in the choices a teenager makes.

Some Peer Pressure Is Good

Hanging out, listening to the same music, dressing, and talking as their friends do are all normal steps teenagers take in struggling for their independence. "Having to belong" is preparation for the bigger step of becoming an independent adult. Parents must understand how important it is to most teenagers to "be part of the crowd." With the support of their peers, teens learn how to build friendships, including friendships with the opposite sex. They use each other to develop, test, and practice social skills they will use their entire lives. Their friends serve as the bridge between dependence on the family and the independence needed as an adult. Parents need to accept that positive peer pressure serves a welcome purpose—even so, teens need help resisting pressures contrary to their family's values. The key to dealing with negative peer pressure is self-confidence. Teenagers who are unsure of themselves and want to be accepted are much more likely to give in to negative peer pressure than those who have plenty of confidence. The following are some ways parents can help teenagers develop self-confidence.

Parent Tips

- Show interest in your teenager's activities.
- Support your teenager's growing independence.
- Encourage responsibility.
- Help set realistic goals.
- Avoid personal criticism. Address the problem, NOT the person.
- Show your teenagers that you love and respect them.
- Let them know they can count on you. This will help develop confidence in outside-the-family relationships.

"*Helping Youth Say No*," National Association of State Boards of Education, as cited by National School Public Relations Association

Parent Involvement Commission

Professional Governance Standards

The bylaws and standing rules for each PTA provide a framework for the organization. In order to operate effectively using this framework, PTA executive boards and individual board members will benefit from adherence to professional standards of governance. Professional governance standards specify principles involved in governing responsibly and effectively and were developed to support PTA boards in their efforts to enhance their membership and the community's understanding about the responsibilities of the PTA board.

The California State PTA has adopted a set of professional governance standards and every PTA is encouraged to adopt these standards. Each PTA that adopts the professional governance standards and notifies the California State PTA, 930 Georgia Street, Los Angeles, CA 90015, will receive a certificate.

Professional Governance Standards

The Individual Board Member:

A PTA board member is a person elected or appointed to serve on a PTA executive board. Individual board members bring unique skills, values and beliefs to the board and in order to govern effectively, individual board members must work together for the association.

To be effective, an individual board member:

- Recognizes and respects differences of perspective and style among the individual board members
- Acts with dignity and understands the implications of demeanor and behavior
- Honors the confidentiality of board discussions
- Is open to new ideas and suggestions
- Is familiar with the bylaws in respect to the individual position as well as the organization as a whole
- Understands that authority rests with the board as a whole and not with individuals
- Understands that the base for all authority rests with the membership
- Participates in opportunities for training
- Commits the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader
- Mentors those with less experience in leadership
- Understands the distinctions between PTA and the school staff and refrains from performing functions that are the responsibility of the school district
- Values, supports and advocates for public education
- Represents the PTA only when authorized to do so

The PTA Board:

The members of the PTA board work together as a governance team which assumes collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive climate during the term of office.

To operate effectively, the board:

- Develops a unity of purpose by involving parents/guardians, students, staff and community
- Communicates a common vision
- Operates openly with trust and integrity
- Remains open and responsive to input from the school community
- Governs in a professional manner treating everyone with civility and respect
- Fulfills requirements set within bylaws and standing rules
- Takes collective responsibility for the board's performance
- Proposes for adoption by the membership a fiscally responsible budget based on the organization's vision and goals
- Monitors the fiscal health of the association regularly
- Ensures that safe and appropriate activities are provided to implement the goals
- Provides community leadership on issues that affect children and youth
- Works collaboratively with other groups and agencies that share the same concerns on issues that affect children and youth
- Encourages individual board members to attend available training opportunities
- Serves as a communication link between the home, school and community
- Evaluates the activities and direction of the board on a regular basis

Brenda Davis

California State PTA President

Membership – Always Ongoing Memberships Are Sought Year Round

As a new year starts, perhaps some resolutions regarding PTA membership would yield some rewards! Ask yourselves...Did we stop looking for members once the classroom parties were awarded? Did we take it for granted that everyone saw the "join our PTA" letter that was sent out in September? Did we talk about the "end" of our membership campaign? Have we stopped asking people to join? Did we stop remitting per capita on a regular basis once we submitted sufficient per capita to qualify for Early Bird and Chairman's Club Awards?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above, it's time for a renewed push and commitment to increasing your PTA's membership. At your school site, now is the time for another flyer, another incentive, another objective to be set and expressed. Did you reach your goal for the year? If not, let people know! If you did, congratulations – but you can still ask people to join. Use every opportunity – always ask. Ideally a "PTA table" at every school or PTA event would have brochures and advertise so that attendees can join PTA but at the very least have someone at every event prepared with envelopes and membership cards who is willing to accept membership dues. Don't wait till the end of an event to ask people to join. Make it part of the introduction; the event itself is probably a result of the work that PTA has done! Also, February with PTA's Founders Day is a perfect time to solicit new members or ask those past PTA leaders you invited to Founders Day to re-join your PTA.

Although membership is year round and anyone can join at any time, we do need to have a cut off to use for determining yearly membership totals – and that cut off is March 31. Plan now to make sure that you have submitted the per capita for all your members. Membership is what makes PTA the recognized voice and leader in providing advocacy efforts for all children. Make your efforts at membership work.

Membership Committee

New Nutrition Laws and How They Will Affect Schools and Parents

Many questions have been asked about two of the latest pieces of legislation to be signed into law, SB 12 and SB 965 in 2005. Both of these laws affect school food nutrition and pupil nutrition on school campuses.

SB 12 – Establishes new nutritional standards on sugar, fat, and calorie content for any food sold on campus outside the federal lunch and breakfast programs, beginning on July 1, 2007.

Specifically, the bill does the following:

- Restricts entrée items sold to no more than 400 calories and four grams of fat per 100 calories
- Restricts snack items sold to no more than 175 calories per individual food item for elementary schools and 250 calories for middle and high schools
- Exempts foods sold at least one-half hour after the end of the school day, off school campus, or during a school-sponsored

pupil activity that occurs after the end of the school day

Any food sold on campus seems to be the key phrase in this bill. Parents may still bring in party food for children, if your local school has no restriction on this.

SB 965 – This bill expands the existing restrictions on soda sales currently in K-8 school to high schools, phased in over two years, beginning July 1, 2007.

Health Commission

The Right Person for the Right Job

The **nominating committee** is one of the most important committees of the PTA. This group of people must recognize and seek qualified nominees for the elected leadership of your PTA. The members of the committee, therefore, have a tremendous influence on the future of your PTA and should be carefully selected.

It's not too early to begin looking for qualified people to serve on your PTA's nominating committee. Your members can certainly be recruiting willing candidates now. Sometimes all it takes is "putting the bug in their ear" for them to consider serving. Then when it's time for the election of the nominating committee, qualified people will be prepared to step forward.

The nominating committee is the only PTA committee that is not appointed by the president. This committee is elected by the members at an association meeting at least two months prior to the election of officers. Determining when to elect the committee and how many people to elect is outlined in your unit bylaws. Don't forget to elect alternates, in the event an elected committee member cannot attend the first committee meeting. Most units should be electing the nominating committee no later than January or February for the election of officers in March or April.

The committee needs a balance of newer and more experienced PTA members, all of whom should be:

- knowledgeable about PTA;
- aware of qualified potential nominees;
- familiar with the eligibility requirements and the qualifications necessary for the offices to be filled;
- capable of tact, objectivity, and discretion; and,
- willing and able to devote adequate time to the responsibilities involved and maintain confidentiality.

Don't overlook students (if you have a PTSA) and teachers.

Election of the nominating committee is not a popularity contest or a vote for whoever is willing to serve, nor should it consist of the PTA executive board. The PTA president never serves on the committee, and the parliamentarian serves only when elected to serve. The principal may be elected, but should at least be an advisor to the group. No person may serve on the committee for two consecutive years. Be sure to elect your nominating committee wisely!

Once the committee is elected, the parliamentarian should call the first committee meeting and instruct the members regarding their task (see *Toolkit*). An alternate may be called to serve in the event an elected member cannot attend the first committee meeting; however, an alternate would not join the committee once the deliberations have begun. The parliamentarian conducts the election of the chairman of the committee and then leaves the committee to fulfill its duties. The parliamentarian should be available by phone to answer any questions the committee members may have.

Potential officers should be willing to attend convention and other training and be prepared to give the time necessary to do the job. The committee should select a slate of nominees that is balanced with both new and experienced officers. The committee is not obligated to nominate the president or any other current officer to serve a second term or to nominate automatically the first vice president for president.

The committee chairman has the responsibility of conducting the committee meetings and contacting potential nominees for office. All discussions within the committee must remain confidential, even after the committee is discharged. If a member of the committee is being considered for an office, the member should be excused from the meeting room during the discussion regarding that office, but may return for the vote, which shall be by ballot.

When contacting potential nominees, it is important that no commitment is made to the individual. The committee must know if the individual is willing to be considered for an office, and then nominate the best candidates according to their ability and commitment to serve the PTA.

When the committee has filled the slate of officers, a written report is prepared by the chairman and signed by the committee members. The report is presented to the membership 30 days prior to the annual election meeting. The committee should continue to work to fill any open positions until the date of the annual election meeting. The work of the committee is concluded at the time of elections. Vacant positions become the responsibility of the president-elect and board-elect.

For further information, please refer to the *California State PTA Toolkit*.

Bylaws Committee

Honorary Service Awards (HSA) Program

The California State PTA recognizes individuals and organizations for their outstanding service to children and youth outside of their routine responsibilities through its Honorary Service Award program. Several types of awards are available: Honorary Service, Continuing Service, Golden Oak, and Very Special Person. Recipients may receive more than one of these at any time. Donations to the HSA program can also be made in memoriam or as a tribute to an individual or group.

The HSA nominating committee may be appointed by the president early in the term. Members of the committee should represent the school community. Their work is defined in the *California State PTA Toolkit*. Sample nomination forms may be printed from the current *California State PTA Toolkit* CD.

Awards may be presented and donations acknowledged at a PTA meeting or function or at an appropriate function of the organization receiving the award or giving the donation.

Units, councils and districts presenting these awards can use media announcements of these awards and donations to promote the positive image and public support of their PTA.

HSA awards and donations provide funding for the California State PTA Scholarship and Grant Program.

For further information, see the *California State PTA Toolkit* or the website at www.capta.org or call the California State PTA office at 213.620.1100 x327 or email HSA@capta.org.

Honorary Service Award Committee

Important Benefits Information For You

When you received your membership card this year, you might have noticed that National PTA has not only redesigned the look of the card (to match their new website design) but has also added a list of the Member Benefits Providers on the back of the card – along with the password and “username” that you need to access certain parts of the National PTA website that are for members only.

National PTA has partnered with a variety of businesses and has negotiated special discounts, fundraising opportunities, and other exclusive, valuable benefits just for PTA members. As a PTA member, you receive a discount and National PTA will also receive a percentage from the sale. We encourage you to read more about these member benefits at www.pta.org/jp_membership_benefits.html

Please note one correction to one of National PTA's Benefit Providers. The 5 percent discount is offered by Barnesandnoble.com for purchases online, not the retail store of Barnes and Noble.

Membership Committee



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For:

- √ Wearables
- √ Jewelry and Lapel Pins
- √ Meeting Materials
- √ Beverage Ware
- √ Pens, Pencils & Paper
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Annual Resources for PTAs
- √ Special Items

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

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

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PTA IN CALIFORNIA
 930 Georgia Street, Los Angeles, California 90015
 PH (213) 620-1100
 FAX (213) 620-1411
 World Wide Web address <www.capta.org>
 Email <info@capta.org>

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President: Brenda Davis
 Vice President for Communications: Sue King
 Editor: Kay Rookhuyzen
 Design: Pat Ruiz

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

CALIFORNIA STATE PTA
930 Georgia Street
Los Angeles, California 90015-1322

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