

## === Making a Great Call for Community Service ===

The PTA at Discovery Bay Elementary School in Contra Costa County knows how to answer when opportunity knocks – or rings.

The call came to Bobbi Nugent, president of the PTA at the school in Thirty-Second District PTA, while reading a news article about Cell Phones for Soldiers, a nonprofit organization that turns discarded cell phones into prepaid calling cards for U.S. troops overseas. The organization, founded in 2004 by a 13-year-old girl and her 12-year-old brother in Massachusetts, sends the phones to ReCellular, which, in turn, pays enough for each phone to buy an hour of talk time. More than 500,000 prepaid calling cards have been distributed so far.

Nugent saw the program as a rare chance to promote recycling and support for those who serve far from home: “We’re teaching our kids we shouldn’t just forget about these soldiers overseas,” she said.

The PTA set up phone collections at the start of the school year last fall.

“They started pouring in,” Nugent said. “Most people have at least one just lying around.”

Kelli Lucido, recycling chair of the school’s PTA, set up collection boxes at the school and elsewhere in the community, including a Presbyterian church, a UPS Store, and a Starbucks. So far, the school has collected about 150 phones, and has no plans to hang up the drive.

The program builds on the school’s spirit of community service, which led to its recent recognition as a Service Learning Leader School, an honor awarded by the California State Board of Education to schools that exhibit outstanding community involvement, citizenship and teamwork.

The program also builds on the school’s established recycling culture. Its PTA raises about \$4,000 a year already through recycling, according to Lucido. The recycling effort, including the cell-phone project, has been driven by the students.

“It’s amazing, the power of the kids,” Lucido said. “They’re the ones that tell their parents to recycle things. They’ll dig through the trash. They get it.”

For Lucido, harnessing that student power has been gratifying.

“Here I am hauling trash bags, and the kids are so excited to see me,” she said. “It’s like I’m a superhero.”

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Photograph/Denise Dimock, Discovery Bay Elementary PTA

Can you hear us now? Students (and a younger sibling) at Discovery Bay Elementary School check out some of the many cell phones they have collected.



### Statesman or Politician – That Is the Question

The time has come to reevaluate the role of government and understand how a state or nation becomes successful. It happens not by accident but by well planned design. Our country was founded on the basic fundamentals of electing statesmen to represent the people. I believe we have lost our course. As James Freeman Clarke once said, “A politician thinks of the next election – a statesman of the next generation.”

Building for generations takes forethought and courage. It takes forethought because you have to start with a big vision of what is necessary to sustain people not only through the year but for years to come. You must be willing to ask “*What revenues are needed?*” We must not just settle for “*What expenses should we cut to match our current revenues?*”

It is a subtle but powerful difference in how you choose to govern. It takes courage because you cannot be ruled by party politics but rather by what is best for all the people. It means anyone’s idea has merit, and at the end of the day the decisions are better for being based on many options, solutions, and different perspectives.

As a statesman you must ensure that your constituents understand that in America we believe that everyone is entitled to opportunities for success. Success for all happens only when we all agree to pay into the system to provide those opportunities for everyone. Aristotle said it best: “The whole is more than the sum of its parts.”

‘A politician thinks of the next election – a statesman of the next generation.’

*James Freeman Clark*

In a downward economy, elected officials sometimes cannot see the forest for the trees. Elected officials have the core responsibility to get out of the trees and not only see but plan for a healthy forest.

PTA believes that the smartest economic plan for California is to invest in its future by investing in the education, health, and welfare of our state’s children. It is not OK for our elected officials to continue to just talk and respond to the gloom and doom. It does not build hopes and dreams for the very people they are representing. By its nature gloom and doom only tear down what has already started to be built. So I continue to ask each of you to donate more of your precious time, put aside your differences, work together and help our elected officials find their way back to representing the people.

It is too costly to sell out our children’s future. It is too costly to allow our politicians to work in a vacuum and believe their own rhetoric. It is up to us all to keep giving them a reality check.

As statesmen, our elected officials need to rise above the obstacles, create a vision for California, work together and lead this state to a brighter future. As Pierre Teilhard de Chardin said, “The future belongs to those who give the next generation reason for hope.”

*everychild.onevoice.*

## March is Arts Education Month

For more information visit [www.capta.org/sections/programs-smarts/index.cfm](http://www.capta.org/sections/programs-smarts/index.cfm)



SMARTS: BRING BACK THE ARTS

# California's Advocacy Efforts Recognized by National PTA

PTA was founded by Alice McLellan Birney, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, and Selena Sloan Butler to improve the lives of America's children. Their vision and drive motivated others to become involved to change policies, as well as the outlook of parents, the public, and the government regarding the well-being of children. One hundred and twelve years later, the founders' dream is still being realized as demonstrated by the National PTA's recognition of the California State PTA for its **Flunk the Budget** advocacy campaign.



and contacts with their elected representatives. The State PTA Board of Managers prepared district presidents for their key leadership role in this campaign with presentations and packets for district and council leaders. State PTA volunteer advocates participated with advocates from other statewide organizations in ongoing meetings with legislators and the Governor's office.

The efforts of the **Flunk the Budget** campaign reduced the fiscal blow to children's programs and education in the state budget passed in September 2008.

Award-winning advocacy also exists at the local PTA level. The Capistrano Unified Council of PTSAs will receive the *National PTA Council Advocacy Award*, and Kim Anderson of Dana Hills High School from the Capistrano Unified Council of PTAs is being honored with the first-ever *Shirley Igo Award for Advocacy*.

The national PTA will present a 2009 Outstanding Advocacy Award to the California State PTA at the March 2009 National Legislative Conference. This is the second year such awards have been given to acknowledge work that affected child-related policy, regulation, or legislation to support PTA's mission and goals.

The **Flunk the Budget** campaign was launched by California State PTA to protest the proposed state budget and to protect funding for education and other critical children's programs. This grass-roots advocacy campaign focused on delivering to elected officials PTA's "Flunk the Budget" message with phone-banking, letter writing, and state and local rallies. Thousands of PTA leaders and members visited their legislators in the Capitol and at their local district offices on designated "**Flunk the Budget**" Fridays during the spring and summer. The California State PTA website provided continuous information and messaging tools. A communication advocacy campaign targeted local media and major media markets in California.

California State PTA Legislation Team volunteers mentored district leaders to assist them with media relations

## A new campaign

The need to speak up for children doesn't go on vacation, even for prize winners. The California State PTA's most recent advocacy campaign is "PTA's Economic Recovery Plan: Invest in Children." PTA members and many others have embraced the campaign's message at events such as a rally in Glendale in early February. About 80 parents and children – and news reporters – gathered to hear from supporters of the plan, including PTA, business and community leaders, and California's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O'Connell.



Legislation Team

## NEW ON OUR WEBSITE

### More Resources for Parents – en ¡Español!

#### Green Grows the PTA Website

The California State PTA has a new Green page on its website. There you'll find:

- How to join the PTA Green Team, and earn a Green Team certificate.
- Useful resources and links to help you learn about the environmental conditions in our schools and communities.
- Many more steps you can take to protect the environment and human health.

Find the website at <http://www.capta.org/sections/programs/pta-green.cfm>

The California State PTA website now has a Spanish language section for PTA leaders and members.

You can find it on the front of our website at <http://www.capta.org/sections/espanol/>

#### Materiales en Español



¡BIENVENIDOS!

#### ¡Manténgase conectado con la PTA de California!

- ¿Qué es PTA?
- Recursos para Asociaciones
- ¡Participe!
- PTA para Estudiantes
- Cómo Unirse a PTA Local

#### Recursos para Padres

- Regreso a Clases
- Ayude a sus Hijos
- Estimule la Lectura
- Hable con sus Hijos
- Becas y Ayudas Económicas
- Exámenes
- Niños con Necesidades Especiales
- Enseñanza de las Artes

# Do You Know the Way to San Jose?

JOIN US April 30 - May 3  
in San Jose for our  
110<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention

## WOW!

### Look at all the Workshops for New Officers at the PTA Convention

*Basic Parliamentary Procedures (Part 1)*  
*Bylaws Q & A*  
*CYA – Cover Your Assets*  
*Developing Emerging Leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*  
*Everything You Need to Know About Membership\**  
*For the Record \**  
*Fun with FUNdraising*  
*Hear Ye – Getting Your Message Across More Effectively*  
*Help! I'm a New Unit President (Part 1)\**  
*Help! I'm a New Unit President (Part 2)\**  
*Helpful Tips to Organize Your Time, Paper and Space*  
*How to Audit*  
*How to Budget*  
*Legal Aspects of PTA*  
*Make PTA History*  
*Meetings Gone Wild!*  
*Membership Idea Exchange for Elementary PTAs*  
*MY PTA/PTSA: Unit Award Program Winning Ideas!*  
*OMDR Plus – Powered by Just Between Friends*  
*Online Bylaws*  
*Parliamentary Jeopardy*  
*Parliamentary Procedures (Part 2)*  
*Practical Tips on Building Male Involvement in PTA*  
*PTA Message – What Is It?*  
*PTA Newsletters – Medium and Message*  
*Recruiting Volunteers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century\**  
*Reflections: Unleash the Talent!*  
*Stuck in a Rut? Overhaul Your Mama's PTA*  
*Stump the Experts*  
*The Art of Unforgettable Communication*  
*The Good, The Bad, The Ugly*  
*The Language of Leadership*  
*The REAL Value of PTA*  
*Treasurers Training – Basic to Advanced*  
*Treasurers Training\**  
*You're on the Board – Now What?\**

*\*These are also offered in Spanish.*

Registration for this year's exciting, informative, and inspiring annual PTA Convention is open! You won't want to miss this year's fabulous speakers. Make sure to preregister so you don't miss Saturday's exciting special event at the Tech Museum of Innovation. We are also continuing the format of the convention with shorter general meetings by adding more and extra time to visit the exhibit hall. This year we will be opening up the exhibit hall on Thursday for free! This is a chance to visit the exhibits to see what they are all about. Also, back by popular demand is the Healthy Walk on Saturday, May 2, 2009. Don't delay — register today!

### How to Register

Go to [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org) and click on the *Convention Registration* link. The link will take you to the registration site. Follow the prompts. Mark only one type of PTA affiliation: unit, council or district. You will be asked for the user name and password from the back of your PTA membership card. If you don't have a card, you can still register, but you will need to verify your membership at registration with a current PTA membership card. Registering online requires a credit card. The fees for any event(s) chosen will be billed to your credit card. You will be able to set up your own password to add or change events or workshops. **There are no refunds once a fee has been charged.** You will receive a confirmation email after you have registered. You may also register by mail with a check or credit card. You can download a copy of the registration form from [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org) or from the *Convention Registration Book* which was mailed to all unit, council and district presidents. Preregistration closes on April 20, 2009; on-site registration will be available April 30 - May 3, 2009.

### New this year

Register early! Registration rates are discounted through March 31; for registrations entered by this date only, name badges and workshops/events tickets will be mailed prior to convention.

We are so excited about convention and look forward to seeing you April 30 - May 3 in San Jose!

*Convention Commission*

# CONVENTION

## Speakers to Inspire at General Meetings



### Third General Meeting (May 1)

**Jake Steinfeld**, Chairman of the Governor's Fitness Council. In 1998, Steinfeld founded the DON'T QUIT! Foundation, with the goal of supporting and educating adolescents about the value of physical fitness. In 2005, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Steinfeld chair of the California Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.



### Fourth General Meeting (May 2)

**Ray Culberson**, Director of Youth Services, San Bernardino Unified School District. Culberson has expertise on dealing with what he calls "kids in chaos," those difficult students whom others often give up on. He'll share the humor, dramatic sketches, management theories and other techniques anyone can use to deal with a multitude of challenges.



### Fifth General Meeting (May 2)

**Carol Channing**, actress and co-founder of the Dr. Carol Channing and Harry Kullijian Foundation for the Arts. Channing doesn't just talk about the importance of the arts in education, she supports it through the foundation she and her husband, Kullijian, started. For her efforts, Channing was presented with the National PTA Life Achievement Award.

## Rescinding a Resolution

Convention delegates are accustomed to hearing proposed resolutions presented annually at general meetings for debate and possible adoption. When might it be appropriate to ask convention delegates to consider voting to rescind (withdraw) a resolution?

Upon scheduled review by California State PTA committees/commissions, a resolution that is deemed no longer relevant to current issues, is no longer needed to assist on a legislative issue, or has fulfilled its intended purpose may be recommended for presentation to convention delegates for a vote to rescind.

Rescission of resolutions has not been a common practice for the California State PTA. Typically, the reviewing body recommends moving resolutions no longer relevant to the historical files. However, there are circumstances when an existing resolution *must* be presented to convention dele-

gates for rescission. For example, if a resolution that would be in conflict with an existing adopted resolution was proposed and recommended for presentation to convention delegates, the existing resolution must be presented for rescission.

The proposed contradicting resolution may not be presented unless convention delegates first vote to rescind the existing resolution. If convention delegates pass the motion to rescind the existing resolution by a two-thirds vote, the proposed new resolution may be presented. If the motion to rescind the existing resolution fails, the new proposed resolution may not be presented.

Only the body that originally adopts a resolution has the authority to rescind it.

*Resolutions Committee*

## Making a Great Call for Community Service

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Now, Nugent and other members of the Delta Council of the PTA are challenging all of their 26 PTA units to participate in a Delta Council Cell Phones for Soldiers effort. The plan calls for friendly competition to collect the most phones during the month of February. As incentive, there will be some sort of award for the winner.

"Of course, the big incentive is doing the right thing here, and looking out for our soldiers," Nugent said.

To find out more about the Cell Phones for Soldiers Program, including how troops can request a calling card, visit the website at [www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com](http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com). You may also contact Kelli Lucido by email at [recycling@dbpta.org](mailto:recycling@dbpta.org), or by phone at Discovery Bay Elementary School at (925) 634-2150. The school's PTA website is [www.dbpta.org](http://www.dbpta.org).



## Leadership Transition

**Your year as an officer is coming to an end, and new officers are being elected. How do you leave your position gracefully? How do you ensure that the new officers are ready to continue to provide strong leadership?**

A thorough leadership transition plan has several benefits:

- ◆ Provides for transfer of significant organizational knowledge.
- ◆ Minimizes the confusion of leadership changeover.
- ◆ Gives outgoing leaders a sense of closure.
- ◆ Utilizes the valuable contributions of experienced leaders.
- ◆ Helps incoming leadership absorb the special expertise of the outgoing leadership.
- ◆ Increases the knowledge and confidence of the new leadership.
- ◆ Minimizes the loss of momentum and accomplishments for the PTA.

### **When do you start? Early!**

- ◆ Begin early in the year to identify emerging leaders.
- ◆ Encourage potential leaders through personal contact; help in developing skills; delegating responsibility to them; sharing with them the personal benefits of leadership; clarifying job responsibilities; letting them know that transition will be orderly and thorough; and modeling an open, encouraging leadership style.
- ◆ When new officers have been elected, orient them together as a group with all of the outgoing officers. This process provides the new leaders with an opportunity to understand each other's roles and to start building their leadership team.
- ◆ Be sure to transfer the knowledge and information necessary for them to function well. Take time to organize procedure books so they may quickly access information.
- ◆ Have individual meetings with old and new officers. Make sure they know what they're getting into.

### **What do you need to transfer?**

Think back to your first weeks. What could you have used to do your job better? Some suggestions are:

- ◆ Effective leadership qualities and skills.
- ◆ Helpful ideas, procedures, and recommendations.
- ◆ Written reports:
  - ◆ Traditions, ideas or completed projects; continuing projects and concerns; ideas never carried out.
  - ◆ Personal and organizational files.
  - ◆ Acquaintance with physical environment, supplies, equipment, and any office procedures.
  - ◆ Introduction to personnel (advisors, administrators, contacts, etc.).
  - ◆ Share what you would have done differently or how you could improve upon the previous year; but remember, part of learning for the new members is figuring it out on their own.
- ◆ A complete record of the organization's structure, goals, and accomplishments (through complete and organized files):
  - ◆ Bylaws
  - ◆ Organizational goals and objectives for previous year(s)
  - ◆ Job descriptions/role clarifications
  - ◆ Evaluations of projects and programs
  - ◆ Previous minutes and reports
  - ◆ Resources/contact lists with addresses and phone numbers
  - ◆ Financial reports
  - ◆ Membership list

Be a good, conscientious leader by providing your successor with these things.

*Adapted from Holden Leadership Center, University of Oregon*

# PTA Continues to Battle Alcohol Consumption by Minors

PTA has serious concerns about the prevalence of teen drinking and its impact on the health and well-being of our young people. Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among our nation's young people, surpassing tobacco and illicit drugs. Underage drinking is a leading public health problem in this country (see box).

"Alcopops," which refer to flavored malt beverages such as Smirnoff Ice and Mike's Hard Lemonade, are often aggressively marketed to young audiences and tend to be the drink of choice for many young people, particularly females. Alcopops are particularly appealing to youth, primarily because they look and taste almost identical to soda pop or lemonade. A recent survey of youth in California supported national findings regarding Alcopops consumption among underage drinkers. The Center for Applied Research Solutions conducted a survey and found that youth are attracted to the colorful, hip packaging, that they underestimate the alcoholic content, and that these drinks are, in fact, very popular with California teens.

### **Advocacy Efforts Against Alcopops**

In recent years, PTA and many other groups made statewide efforts to increase the rate of tax for these products from the previous level of 20 cents per gallon (the rate for beer), to

### **SOME SOBERING FACTS**

Each year, approximately 5,000 young people under the age of 21 die as a result of alcohol consumption. Of these:

- 1,900 die from automobile accidents
- 1,600 from homicides
- 300 from suicide
- Hundreds more from other injuries such as falls, burns and drowning.

### **HOW MUCH ARE STUDENTS DRINKING?**

Results of national surveys suggest that students who reported having consumed alcohol represented:

- 75% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders
- 66% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders
- Approximately 40% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders

In addition, surveys found the following proportion of students reported engaging in heavy or binge drinking within the past two weeks:

- 11% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders
- 22% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders
- 29% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders

\$3.30 per gallon (the rate for distilled spirits). Although Alcopops contain about the same amount of alcohol as beer, they also contain trace amounts of distilled spirits. Research shows that higher prices or taxes on alcoholic beverages are associated with lower levels of alcoholic consumption, especially among young people.

These efforts were successful. The California Board of Equalization ruled in favor of the higher tax rate for Alcopops, to take effect on

October 1, 2008. Unfortunately, since the ruling, the alcohol industry has responded by changing the way they formulate their flavored malt beverages so as to avoid this substantial tax increase. Before the new tax was to go into effect last October, the industry was able to reformulate its products to retain the alcohol content, while reducing the amount of flavoring agents that contained distilled spirits. They then sought, and were granted, an exemption from the higher tax.

By reducing the amount of distilled spirits in flavored malt beverages, the industry also avoided having to comply with tough new labeling laws that would have required them to place the words "CONTAINS ALCOHOL" on each container. California State PTA had strongly supported this legislation, AB 346, authored by Assembly Member Jim Beall, Jr., and signed by the Governor.

Despite having won some temporary victories, PTA and many others working to reduce alcohol consumption by young people are now back to square one. The battle will continue, as the health and safety of our young people are too important to ignore. Stay tuned!

*Community Concerns Commission*

## President's Challenge for Membership

I am presenting a special President's Challenge to you and all of your members: We need each of you to sign up just one more new member before the end of March.

If each and every one of us makes the commitment to reach out to just one new member, we will strengthen our collective voice. And every new voice we add to PTA brings us closer to achieving the goals we hold dear for children.

This year we have an opportunity, through your efforts, to raise our total membership – and that will send a strong message both locally, and at the state and national levels, that PTA's voice is stronger than ever, and that parents and families are engaged and deeply concerned about the future of our state.

*Pam Brady, president of California State PTA*



# Take Your Family to School

**B**uilding upon the vast research that shows a direct correlation between family involvement in schools and student achievement, PTA sponsors the annual Take Your Family to School Week. This year, the dates were February 8-14.

Improving family-school relations is as old as PTA, dating back to 1897, although Take Your Family to School Week was a recent development, started in 2006.

This year, 32 schools received \$1,897 for their efforts to foster involvement through Take Your Family to School Week.

## Of the 32 grants, four went to California PTA units:

- ♦ Paul Ecke Central PTA, Encinitas
- ♦ College View School PTA, Glendale
- ♦ Tulsa Street PTA, Granada Hills
- ♦ Torrance Elementary PTA, Torrance

## Bringing School to Families on the Big Screen

The College View School in Glendale is exclusively for students with severe disabilities. When parents visit, the students are distracted. Yet, the PTA unit there won a Take Your Child to School Week award. Rather than the parents coming to class, the class went to the parents, thanks to a professional video that was to be shown to parents.

“Our school is special education exclusively with students from three to 21. We serve several districts. We thought if families can’t come to the school, wouldn’t it be great to give



Children enjoy sharing school with the adults in their lives.

parents a glimpse of what a typical day is?” said Andrea Crissman, unit president.

That intriguing idea caught the attention of Jan Harp Domene, president of the National PTA. She joined the College View parents at the viewing and spaghetti dinner.

At the dinner, suggested by the parents, the unit handed out its first ever Honorary Service Award. The recipient was Louis Kovac, who has volunteered daily on behalf of the school for the past 26 years.

Crissman was sure the unit’s application for the Take Your Family to School award would be tossed out because she answered “no” to one application question: “Would you like more information about college financing?”

“Our students don’t go on to college,” she explained.

Turns out it was what the unit was doing that mattered when it came to the PTA Take Your Family to School Week award.

## Building on an Existing Program

At Paul Ecke Central School, building on an existing program was the key to winning its award.

“It was simple,” said Carol Parker, PTA unit president. “We already did a Grandparents Day every year. It fell the same week. ... We just tried to include things we were already going to do.”

Helping the situation was a new principal who wanted to improve the library and who started a parent book club. The library now has 100 grade level books about grandparents and intergenerational relationships. Both the library enhancements, and the book club were funded with the Take Your Family to School award.

# Week Pays Off for Everyone

The principal's book club had just finished reading, "Raising Lifelong Learners: A Parent's Guide," by Lucy Calkins and Bellino Lydia (Da Capo Press, 336 pages).

All the activities, including a musical, an essay contest, and grandparents visiting classrooms "encouraged kids to talk with their grandparents," Parker said.

## A Week that Draws Support and Praise

The event attracts attention from national organizations such as: National Association of Elementary

School Principals (NAESP), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the National School Boards Association (NSBA), iVillage, All Pro Dad, and the National Fatherhood Initiative. PTA will invite administrators, corporations, and decision makers to support the effort again in the coming year.

Last year, Roland Warren, president of the National Fatherhood Initiative, spoke about the importance of Take Your Family to School Week: "An involved, responsible and committed father

can safeguard his children from poor academic performance, disciplinary problems, and dropping out of school. Dads can also play a key role in their children's academic success. ... This event is a great way for fathers to get involved with their child's schooling and for families to come together under the cause of education."

The Take Your Family to School Week awards are funded by the AXA Foundation. The Foundation is the philanthropic arm of AXA Equitable, a financial services organization.

## The Lesson: Parent Involvement Essential

A March 2008 MetLife Foundation article reported the following about parent involvement in schools.

*There is no debate about the fact that family involvement in schools boosts student achievement. Families and parents can support their children's schooling by volunteering, attending school functions and participating in parent-teacher conferences. They can become more involved by helping their children improve their schoolwork through encouragement, modeling desired behavior (such as reading for pleasure), monitoring and helping with homework, and actively tutoring their children at home.*

*Studies show that when parents and family members are involved in their children's school, children benefit, schools benefit, and families benefit.*

***Benefits to children are regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or parents' education level and include:***

- ◆ Higher grades and test scores;
- ◆ Better attendance records and homework completion rates;
- ◆ Higher graduation rates and higher postsecondary education enrollment;
- ◆ Lower dropout rates;
- ◆ Decrease in negative behaviors such as alcohol and drug use and violence;
- ◆ Increase in positive attitudes and behaviors.

***Benefits to schools include:***

- ◆ Better teacher morale and higher ratings of teachers by parents;
- ◆ Better reputations of schools within the community;
- ◆ Better performance of school programs that involve parents versus

*identical programs that do not include parents.*

***Benefits to families include:***

- ◆ Better connection between parents, children and communities;
- ◆ Increase in support and services to families, including opportunities to improve family relationships;
- ◆ Improved relationships between parents and children.

*There is a correlation between the level of family involvement and student achievement – the more extensive the family involvement, the greater the impact on student achievement.*

*Further, to produce long-lasting gains, parent and family involvement activities must be well-planned, inclusive, and comprehensive.*

*- From the March 2008 MetLife Foundation Afterschool Alert Issue No. 32*

# Energize Your School Community: Building School, Family, and Community Partnerships

By Joanne D. Martin, PhD, MSBA

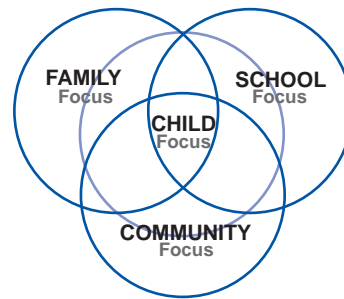
Statistical tests show school practices to promote parental involvement have a statistically significant and direct influence on student success when the following five elements are focused to promote learning and development. To promote these elements effectively, high performing schools empower their members to action through investments in leadership, resources, professional development, and evaluation.

## Framework of Five School-initiated Practices to Promote School, Family, and Community Partnerships

- 1) **Outreach** – enlisting the participation of parents, students and community members in the educational process to promote learning and development.
- 2) **Programs and operations** – informing, developing, and/or unifying the school community as partners in the educational process, preparing participants to become active contributors.
- 3) **Engagement** – direct *person-to-person* interactions that facilitate, support, and reward the involvement of parents and community members in the education of children.
- 4) **Community building** – directly expanding the availability of enrichment opportunities for students in support of learning, physical and social development, health, safety, and good citizenship.
- 5) **Support services** – providing targeted support for students and their families.

All practitioners, including principals, teachers, community liaisons, and parent volunteers, may apply this framework; your school, family, and community partnerships will grow, resulting in gains for children.

Model of School, Family, and Community Partnerships



Source: J. D. Martin (2009). *How school practices to promote parental involvement influence student success.*

## How School Practices to Promote Parental Involvement Influence Student Success

- Practices to promote involvement have a statistically significant and direct influence on student success. Practices include **outreach, programs and operations, engagement, community building, and support services.**
- When practitioners work in isolation from their students' families, parental involvement declines to the detriment of student success.
- Highest performing schools and practitioners invest more time and resources, and are more skilled in building school, family, and community partnerships. They also demonstrate a superior organizational capacity, enabling them to mobilize the community on a regular basis.
- Highest performing schools and practitioners value partnerships as an asset, encouraging community-wide contributions and thereby resulting in increased involvement, higher student success, and ultimately better schools.
- When practitioners work to include parents as equal partners in education, investing time and resources to develop their involvement strategically in ways that intend clear impacts for learning and development, parents increase involvement in ways that benefit children.
- By facilitating and supporting involvement, highest performing schools and teachers are better at engaging in direct person-to-person interactions with parents.
- Partnership practices commonly and consistently applied in a concerted manner become culturally engrained in the school community, optimizing involvement in the interest of helping students thrive.

### About the Author

Joanne D. Martin, PhD, MSBA, is an expert in the field of school, family, and community partnerships. She is a researcher, educator, and former PIRC Director who has worked with the California State PTA for more than 11 years. She has compiled more than 60 reports and articles covering the field of education. This article was excerpted from her research titled, *How school practices to promote parental involvement influence student success* (2009). Email Dr. Martin at [jmartin@sterlingtonconsulting.com](mailto:jmartin@sterlingtonconsulting.com).

## Practice Successful Outreach

**O**utreach is first a commitment to create an inviting climate. It is further about forming respectful, trusting relationships throughout the school community and recognizing that everyone has value. Outreach is sharing and distributing important information about PTA and topics of concern that inform and invite action.

The greater the ability of PTA members and leaders to form positive one-on-one relationships with all community members, the greater their ability to generate positive results for all children, the school community, and the organization.

Outreach efforts are successful when PTA leaders can develop community support with meaningful two-way discussions focusing on student success. Outreach includes efforts that focus on enlisting the participation of parents, students, and community members in the educational process.

- Invite and encourage everyone to be a part, and assure everyone may play a role, because your community is your greatest asset.
- Empower others with information, support and resources focused on students' needs.
- See the uniqueness of each individual.

- Work to build representative leadership and voice – support the democratic process. Is the PTA reflective of the greater community?
- Assess practices to assure inclusiveness and speak out for change.

*Membership Committee*

### STEPS TO TAKE:

**Be Bold** – Envision community-wide involvement in seeking educational excellence.

**Understand That Everyone Has Value** – See the assets each person brings because everyone counts!

**Speak to Everyone** – Build a volunteer base that is representative of the diversity of the community, encompassing all languages and customs.

**Build Personal Relationships** – Invite involvement through one-on-one relationships focused on what can be achieved for children.

**Show School Spirit and Pride** – Display logos and accomplishments, student work, and share expressions of affirmation because, "This school is the best!"

**Readily Share Information** – Share PTA's goals and values, programs, PTA contact information, resources, and published literature on important topics.

**Check Your Success** – Regularly measure your efforts, share your results, and modify your goals.

## President Signs Bill to Expand Children's Health Insurance

In early February, President Barack Obama signed H.R. 2, the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), ensuring that children already enrolled in the program will continue to get the health coverage they need, and strengthening SCHIP so states can cover more uninsured children.

SCHIP funds California's Healthy Families Program, which provides affordable health coverage to 900,000 California children.

"Children's health is critical to the well-being, academic success, and life outcomes of our nation," said California State PTA President Pam Brady. "Better health status can improve educational outcomes, thereby resulting in higher wages and improved economic well-being later in life."

The U.S. Senate passed the bill on January 29, 2009, by a vote of 66 to 32. The U.S. House of Representatives approved the legislation by a 2-1 margin on January 14.

The reauthorization will extend SCHIP for four and a half years and cover the \$32.8 billion cost, primarily through an increase in federal tobacco taxes. California will receive \$1.5 billion in the first year – enough to do the following:

- ♦ Continue insuring the 900,000 children enrolled in the state's Healthy Families Program;
- ♦ Cover the 180,000 uninsured children who currently qualify but are not enrolled; and
- ♦ Extend coverage to children in families up to 300 percent of the poverty level (\$55,000 annual income for a family of three).

The federal government sends California \$2 for every \$1 that the state invests in Healthy Families.

Wendy Lazarus, co-president of The Children's Partnership said: "With more Californians losing their jobs and their health insurance every day, this huge victory for children hasn't come a moment too soon."

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for specials and new items**

## Upcoming Events

### March

March is Arts Education Month

**3** Start of Teen Driving Safety Week

**31** Final Installment of Per Capita Dues and Insurance Premiums - due in state office

**31** Membership Challenge Award - applications due in state office

**31** Presidential Award for district PTAs

### April

**20** Last day for early convention registration

**20-21** Arts to the Core: Building a Future for Arts Education in California; in Sacramento

**110<sup>th</sup> Annual California State PTA  
Convention  
April 30-May 3, 2009  
San Jose Convention Center**

**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

2327 L Street, Sacramento, California 95816-5014  
PH (916) 440-1985  
FAX (916) 440-1986  
World Wide Web address <[www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org)>  
Email <[info@capta.org](mailto:info@capta.org)>

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President: Pam Brady  
Vice President for Communications: Carol Kocivar  
Editor: Shirley Gold  
Executive Director: Paul Richman  
Design: Pat Ruiz

The mission of the California State PTA is to positively impact the lives of all children and families by representing our members and empowering and supporting them with skills in advocacy, leadership and communications.

*Adopted July 2007*

CALIFORNIA STATE PTA  
2327 L Street  
Sacramento, California 95816-5014

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