

The California State PTA believes it is important for parents and community members to be knowledgeable about education issues affecting student learning/achievement. The PTA education chairman promotes understanding of the purposes and needs of public schools and encourages participation by parents and community members in working towards, improvements in public education.

WHAT TO DO

- Identify and gather information important to education and the community.*
- Become acquainted with the school staff, school district staff, and decision-/policy-makers, such as members of the site council and/or school board.
- Assist and/or accompany the PTA president when meeting with decision-makers/policy-makers regarding education.
- Inform and educate the PTA membership through programs, conferences, projects and newsletters and also inform parents how they can gain access to additional resources.
- Regularly attend school board meetings, gathering information to be shared with the membership.
- Encourage participation on school advisory groups, school site councils, or fact-finding/study committees; provide meaningful and valuable contributions.
- Work with other schools in the school district and council/district PTA on education issues that will affect student achievement.
- Communicate with the council/district PTA counterpart.
- Share information prepared and distributed by the council/district, California State PTA and National PTA.
- Attend council and district PTA trainings and California State PTA and National PTA conventions.
- Keep a procedure book.

TODAY'S PUBLIC EDUCATION PRIORITIES

- Advocate for stable, long-range funding for public schools.
- Increase parent involvement and broad-based community support.
- Improve and measure academic achievement and student performance according to the state's adopted standards.
- Ensure that testing is based on curricula adopted to meet state standards and on what students are expected to learn.
- Identify and meet the diverse needs of all students.
- Ensure a learning environment free of censorship.

- Support efforts to keep schools safe.
- Help educate parents to recognize that "choice" regarding public school sites for their children should be based on the academic and developmental needs of each student.

INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**PTAs should share in the decision-making process and the implementation of the legally-required parent involvement policy...Education Code 11500-11506 and the State Board of Education 1994 Parent Involvement Policy. Shared decisions should include but not be limited to:

- School accountability Report Card (SARC), an instrument to inform the local community about the conditions and progress of the school, including holding public forums to share results with the community.
- School Budget
- Curriculum
- Assessment
- School Site Council/Governance
- District Advisory and Community Advisory Committees

CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE

- Make sure members are familiar with school and programs.
- Look for local hot issues, such as library programs and computer access.
- Identify current issues of concern to the community. Attend school board meetings regularly; gathering information to share with the community.
- Encourage participation on school advisory groups, school-site councils, or study committees, or seek other opportunities that provide meaningful contribution.
- Work with other schools in the school district and council and district PTAs on education issues that will affect student achievement.
- Conduct a nonpartisan study of controversial issues.
- Sponsor school board candidates' nights and encourage parent attendance.
- Speak out on education issues.
- Recognize that influencing legislative decisions affecting schools depends upon action and response from individuals - parents, PTA members, and other local citizens.
- Plan programs and activities that provide opportunities for learning about issues and challenges facing public schools.

- Help school staff generate enthusiasm for Back-to-School Night, Open House, student-centered activities, and other school-sponsored events.

WHERE DO YOU BEGIN?

- Assess the needs of your membership and community and plan activities that will best meet those needs.
- Become familiar with publication topics that help initiate, influence and implement programs (e.g., materials from EdSource, the school district, the California Department of Education).
- Encourage ongoing PTA membership and leadership training on education issues.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- *California State PTA Toolkit* (position statements regarding education issues and list of convention resolutions).
- Council/District PTA newsletter if available
- *Our Children* (National PTA magazine, subscription)
- *PTA in California* (official newsletter of the California State PTA, subscription)
- California State PTA Parent Education Manuals:
 - *Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Guide*
 - *Los Padres Eligen Participar (PEP) Guía* - Spanish edition
- *Sacramento Update* (subscription available at capta.org)
ADD available on website
- *What's Happening in Washington* (included in *Our Children*)
- *School Administrator's Manual* (reference material for school administrators to increase understanding of PTA)
- EdSource materials <http://www.edsource.org>
- National PTA *Annual Resources for PTAs* and National weekly e-mail information for PTAs www.pta.org
- California State PTA website www.capta.org
Communicator and *PTA In California* available online.
- U.S. Department of Education <http://www.ed.gov/>
- California Department of Education <http://www.cde.ca.gov/>
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