

PTA is a child advocacy organization whose legislative mission is to speak on behalf of all children and youth. One of the Purposes of PTA is “To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.” PTA promotes and encourages legislative advocacy for the education and welfare of all children and youth.

### **ROLE OF PTA IN LEGISLATION**

The California State PTA takes positions on issues/legislation based on position statements in the *California State PTA Toolkit*, California State PTA convention resolutions, California State PTA Legislation platform and National PTA positions and convention resolutions.

The unit legislation chairman provides PTA members with information about PTA positions on current legislation and issues to help members carry out their responsibilities. Units may choose not to promote a California State PTA position, but they must not officially oppose a PTA position. (Advocacy Section, *California State PTA Toolkit*, 93-212)

### **WHAT TO DO**

- Obtain materials from predecessor and unit president, or if no materials are available, begin a new file that includes the resources listed below under “Resources and References.”
- Attend council, district and State PTA meetings, conferences and workshops. Know council and district PTA counterparts and consult them for advice and assistance.
- Download California State PTA *Sacramento Update*, available for downloading at [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org).
- Study the California State PTA Legislation Platform (4.2.4, 122) adopted by convention delegates in even-numbered years. The Platform outlines the scope of PTA legislation activities.
- Study the California State PTA Legislation Policies and Procedures (4.2.5, 123) adopted by convention delegates in odd-numbered years. The Policies define how the California State PTA legislation program works; unit and member participation is guided by the Policies.
- Become familiar with PTA Resolutions and Position Statements.
  - California State PTA Position Statements are printed in the *California State PTA Toolkit*. The *Toolkit* section 4.5 provides a list of current California State PTA Resolutions. The California State PTA Resolutions Book is available online at [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org) or individual resolutions are available by title from the California State PTA Fax-on-Demand service at 800.406.3680. (Introduction viii-xx)
- National PTA position Statements and Resolutions are available online at [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org).
- Contact district PTA president for further assistance.
- Learn how a bill becomes law; know how to get copies of bills; learn how to obtain information on and track bills; know how to contact legislators. Learn how to access California State PTA positions on legislative bills.
- Maintain a list of the names, addresses, phone/fax numbers, and e-mail addresses for all elected representatives in the area: U.S. Senators, U.S. Congress member, State Senator, State Assembly member, Board of Supervisors member, city council members, and school board members.
- Report to PTA members about issues affecting the school and community and the legislative activities at all levels of government. Be objective; give factual reports. Be sure to include PTA positions. (See *California State PTA Toolkit* for guidance on local issues.)
- Write newsletter articles and circulate materials from council, district, State, and National PTA. Give reports at PTA meetings.
- Observe Legislation Policy #11 (4.2.5k,126), which sets guidelines for sending legislation material home with students.
- Establish contacts with local individuals, groups, organizations and agencies to develop sources of information on local and statewide issues that affect the school, families and community.
- Invite legislators/policymakers/elected officials to visit the school.
- Know the calendar for the two-year State Legislative session.
- Join the online listserv to receive legislative information and Legislation Action Alerts from the California State PTA. Respond to Legislation Alerts from the California State PTA.
- Join the National PTA “Member-to-Member” Network, and subscribe to the National PTA e-newsletter “This Week in Washington.”
- Establish a method for sharing PTA Legislative Action Alerts with other PTA members.
- Obtain California State PTA positions and analysis on statewide ballot measures.
- Identify issues of local need or special interest by informal survey of members or suggestions from other PTA chairmen or school authorities.
- Consult with council or district PTA legislation chairman to coordinate efforts with other PTAs in the area. Forward findings to appropriate people, if study involves a district PTA or state issue.

- Keep council, district PTA and California State PTA counterparts informed about contacts with legislators and responses from legislators.
  - Participate in legislation study groups (How to Make a Study 7.4.2, 288).

### **ENCOURAGE PTA MEMBERS TO**

- Meet with local government officials (e.g., school board and city council members, county supervisors), and know the local policies and ordinances affecting children and youth.
- Meet with state and federal legislators, when they are in the local district PTA office.
- Participate in California State PTA legislative conferences and council/district PTA-sponsored visits to Sacramento.
- Participate in legislation study groups and informal surveys of the issues, and attend Candidates' Forums.
- Work with other local community organizations, such as the League of Women Voters, to sponsor nonpartisan candidates' forums preceding elections. (Election Campaigns and the Role of PTA 4.3,127; Nonpartisan Policy 1.3.3, 16.)

### **RESOURCES AND REFERENCES**

- The *California State PTA Toolkit* (available online at [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org), *English and Spanish*)
- The California State PTA *Resolutions Book* (available online at [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org), via Fax-on-Demand at 800.406.3680, or contact district PTA leadership for assistance.)
- California State PTA *Sacramento Update* (available for downloading at no cost online at [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org))
- PTA in California* (subscription)
- California State PTA *Communicator* (subscription)
- National PTA *Annual Resources for PTAs* (available online at [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org), *English and Spanish*)
- Our Children* (National PTA magazine, subscription)
- Review the *California State PTA Toolkit* Section on Advocacy (available online at [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org), English and Spanish).

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