

RESOLUTION A

Public School Governance Authority

- WHEREAS 1** The Constitution of the State of California creates school governance separate from municipal government; and
- WHEREAS 2** The California State PTA believes that locally elected boards of education should be directly responsible for and accountable to their constituents; and
- WHEREAS 3** It has been proposed in some cities and school districts of California that there be a change in the public school governing structure by transferring the governance authority to municipal government; and
- WHEREAS 4** The California State PTA was instrumental in passing Proposition 3 in 1946 that amended Article IX of the California Constitution, which clearly established a separation of powers between municipal government and school district governance; and
- WHEREAS 5** The California State Constitution, Article IX, Section 6, clearly states “No school or college or any other part of the public school system shall be, directly or indirectly, transferred from the public school system or placed under the jurisdiction of any authority other than one included within the Public School System”; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED 1** That the California State PTA, its units, councils, and districts, reaffirm and recommit themselves to the separation of municipal government from local school district governance and to the constitutionally established independence of locally elected boards of education, directly accountable to the voter, taxpayers, communities, parents, and students of their district.

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Action by PTA Organizations

District Presidents Committee, California State PTA
California State PTA Board of Managers

Background Summary

In California a governance system that separates control of municipalities and school districts is evident from the earliest versions of the State Constitution and follows through several constitutional changes. Early versions of the Constitution refer to the duties of the County Superintendent of Schools as separate from those municipal governments.

The California State PTA in 1946 believed education reform was necessary due to population growth, a shortage of schools and teachers, and a history of municipal governments meddling in school district governance. To prepare for growth and to reaffirm the separation of schools and cities, PTA sponsored Proposition 3, a sweeping package of reform measures that among other provisions, prohibits transfer of any public school or college to any authority not under the public school system. Proposition 3 added Article IX, Section 14, to the State Constitution and states “The Legislature shall have power, by general law, to provide for the incorporation and organization of school districts, high school districts, and community college districts, of every kind and class, and may classify such districts.” Proposition 3 was overwhelmingly approved by 74% of the voters.

The State requires independence of school boards from local municipal government, placing education in the hands of education professionals and elected school trustees to manage the district’s affairs. School trustees are readily accessible to parents, students and educators. Though *Serrano v. Priest* and Proposition 13 sorely tested this concept, even those challenges only served to ultimately buttress California’s commitment to public education as shown by the passage of Proposition 98, which created a formula for state funding of education.

The constitutional separation of powers has remained in tact in California until recently when the mayors of Los Angeles, Fresno and other cities attempted to take over urban school districts through legislative action. After Assembly Bill 1381 was chaptered in 2006, legal action was taken in the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles. The court decreed that the defendants “refrain from enforcing or implementing AB 1381 in the execution of the course and scope of their official duties.” The ruling holds that AB 1381 violates State Constitution Article IX, Sections 5, 6, and 8.

To date there is no conclusive evidence that municipal governments could do a better job of educating our children. In a time when voters feel more and more disenfranchised and distant from their elected officials and public agencies, school boards remain close to those they serve. PTA believes our children are better served by an independent California public education system.

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RESOLUTION B

Financing California's Public Schools

- WHEREAS 1** The California State PTA recognizes the need to determine and secure an adequate level of funding and resources for public schools that ensures a quality education for every student; and
- WHEREAS 2** To assure the opportunity for all students to reach their full potential, funds must be available to provide for the diverse needs of students and the differential costs to school districts; and
- WHEREAS 3** The California State PTA recognizes that a stable and consistent finance system and responsible fiscal planning are necessary for a quality public education; and
- WHEREAS 4** California business, industry and society need a well-educated citizenry to compete in a technology and information-based society and the global market; and
- WHEREAS 5** Funding and resources are needed to alleviate crowded classrooms, build new schools to meet the needs of a shifting population, and to modernize and repair aging school facilities; and
- WHEREAS 6** California continues to rank near the bottom of all the states in funding for instructional materials and in the number of teachers, counselors, school nurses, librarians, and other certificated school personnel; and
- WHEREAS 7** The California State PTA is a strong proponent of Proposition 98, California's constitutional guarantee of minimum state funding for the state's public schools; and
- WHEREAS 8** State policy makers continue to explore new methods for funding public schools; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED 1** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts work to educate public policy makers, PTA members, community members, and the media about the shared responsibility in the continuing need for the necessary resources and funding for California's public school programs and facilities; and be it further
- RESOLVED 2** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts support the ongoing efforts to explore new models of public school

funding to ensure a quality education for every student; and be it further

RESOLVED 3 That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts continue to make financing our public schools, both programs and facilities, a top priority in order to ensure a quality education for every student.

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Action by PTA Organizations
Education Commission, California State PTA
California State PTA Board of Managers

Background Summary

Since 1976 the California State PTA has adopted numerous resolutions, more than a dozen in all, that address issues of adequate and stable funding for our state's public schools. PTA strongly supported the passage by voters in 1988 of Proposition 98, which established California's current constitutional guarantee of minimum funding for K-12 schools and community colleges. California State PTA Legislation Platform General Principles call for "the continued constitutional guarantee of financial support for public schools as the first claim on all state revenues in the general fund."

In spite of Proposition 98, California continues to rank near the bottom of all the states in funding for public education, including the number of teachers, administrators, and other school personnel per student. While Proposition 39 lowered the voter percentage required to pass local school facilities bond measures, the critical need for new and modernized school facilities remains. In addition, federal and state mandates for academic standards and accountability for the performance of all students have placed additional pressure on the use of limited school funds.

The current state of school finance in California is a complex system that is difficult for parents, community members, and even policy makers to understand. Differences in the ways schools are financed; from revenue limits to categorical programs, create inequities in funding for schools, for school districts, and for subgroups of students. Formulas for funding charter schools, basic aid school districts, and funding for federal programs such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have led to further conflicts, inequities and confusion, and to the adoption of numerous PTA resolutions. The goal of this resolution is to retire many of the outdated resolutions on school finance by creating a single school finance resolution that reaffirms PTA's commitment to making adequate funding for California's public schools a top priority. Finally, in 2005 delegates to the California State PTA annual convention adopted a new resolution "Education: A 21st Century Vision," which addressed the components that

PTA believes are necessary to a quality education. The resolution “Financing California’s Public Schools” addresses the need to fund this vision.

This resolution will replace the following California State PTA school finance resolutions, which will be placed in the “Historical File of Resolutions”:

- California K-12 Public School Funding Crisis (1998)
- Education Funding Crisis (1981)
- Equal Access to School Improvement Program Funds (1983)
- Equalized Base Revenue Limit Funding (1991)
- Nonsuspension of Proposition 98 (1991)
- Post Proposition 13 Funding of Public Education (1979)
- School Finance (1976)
- School Funding (1981)
- School Support Program (1976)
- Specially Funded Programs (1981)
- Support of Public Education, PTA Priority (1980)

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Draft Only

RESOLUTION C

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA) UNDERFUNDING

- WHEREAS 1** The California State PTA advocates for a quality public education for each child, and believes that it is essential for public resources to adequately fund all mandated programs and services; and
- WHEREAS 2** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), adopted in 1975, has specified that by 1982 the federal government authorizes a maximum allotment per disabled child served of 40% of the national average per pupil expenditure, yet Congress has never appropriated more than 19%; and
- WHEREAS 3** In 2005-06, the California Department of Education reported nearly 700,000 students enrolled in special education programs in California, incurring a cost of approximately \$4 billion, with approximately \$1 billion provided by IDEA federal funding grants; and
- WHEREAS 4** In 2006-07, in order to comply with IDEA federal mandates, California school districts may be required to transfer approximately \$1 billion from the general education budget to the special education budget; therefore be it
- RESOLVED 1** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts advocate for the maximum authorized allotment from the federal government of 40% of mandated IDEA program costs; and be it further
- RESOLVED 2** That the California State PTA encourage its units, councils and districts to educate their membership about the funding shortfall of IDEA mandates and its encroachment on the school districts' general education budgets.

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Action by PTA Organizations
Fourth District PTA
California State PTA Board of Managers

Background Summary

For more than a century, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has worked in united effort on behalf of all children and youth. As stated in the core values of the California State PTA, “We believe our responsibility includes advocating for the safety and welfare of all children and the opportunity for a quality public education for each child.” Additionally California State PTA position statement 4.5.24, *Encroachment: Effect on Public Education*, states that “we also believe that it is essential to appropriate adequate public resources to fully fund all mandated programs and services...”

In 1975, Congress enacted the *Educated for all Handicapped Children Act* (Public Law 94-142). The act, now called the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) (Public Law 108-446), provides funds to states for the education of children with disabilities. At the core of the act is the requirement that children with disabilities must have access to a “free, appropriate public education.” In addition, states and school districts must identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities to determine eligibility for special education and related services. Each child receiving services must have an individual education program (IEP), and, “to the maximum extent appropriate,” must be educated in the least restrictive environment with children who are not disabled.

In California, special education funding is provided by the state to each school district, using a formula created in the base year of 1979-80. The base year funding amount is increased as the total enrollment numbers grow, with cost of living adjustments added. Unfortunately, due to state budget constraints, these amounts have not been consistently funded through the years.

Encroachment on the school district budgets occurs when the districts spend more for federally mandated special education programs than they received in federal or state funding. As a result, dollars must be used to fund mandated special education programs, thereby reducing monies available for other general education programs. Full funding of federally mandated programs and services would not only provide special education students with the programs they need, it would also allow general fund dollars to be used for the benefit of all students.

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RESOLUTION D

COMPREHENSIVE WASTE REDUCTION IN SCHOOLS

- WHEREAS 1** The California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 requires that all California cities and counties reduce solid waste disposed of in landfills by 50 percent through source reduction, recycling and composting activities, and California school districts responsible for disposing of nearly 800,000 tons per year, are a natural partner in this process; and
- WHEREAS 2** The Public Resource Code, sections 42620-42622, requires the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) to provide school districts assistance in establishing and implementing source reduction and recycling programs and states that source reduction and recycling programs in schools will educate children on the importance of these activities, and will teach them waste management skills that will last throughout their lives; and
- WHEREAS 3** The School Diversion and Environmental Education Law (DEEL) of 2001 mandates that the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education shall include integrated waste management, and other environmentally important topics, in the K-12 science framework; and
- WHEREAS 4** The DEEL also encourages every school district and school site in California to implement source reduction, recycling, and garden composting programs in order to achieve the following goals: reduce waste and conserve resources, provide pupils with a “hands-on” learning experience, minimize the expenditure of taxpayer and education dollars on solid waste collection and disposal, cooperate with cities and counties in developing plans and programs to meet and exceed the state’s waste reduction and recycling mandate, utilize to the maximum extent feasible, products and supplies made from recycled materials; and
- WHEREAS 5** The Legislature provides for funding of grants to school districts to be used for supplies and professional development related to the establishment of instructional school gardens, and has declared that school gardens provide an interactive, hands-on learning environment in which pupils learn composting and waste management techniques; and

- WHEREAS 6** California Education Code, sections 32370-32376, recommends that each school district establish and maintain a paper recycling program in all classrooms, administrative offices, and other areas owned or leased by the school district, and encourage school districts to give preference to the purchase of recycled paper with the highest percentage of post consumer waste possible and to eliminate the purchase of paper and paper products which are deemed potential contaminants of the educational agency's paper recycling program; and
- WHEREAS 7** The CIWMB has determined that at least 15 schools in the State of California demonstrate that school district waste reduction programs can be successful, and collaborative partnerships are effective, and cost-savings tools are readily available to school districts to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of waste reduction programs; now therefore be it resolved
- RESOLVED 1** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to support implementation of effective waste reduction programs at their schools by helping to create partnerships with parents, teachers, students, district and city personnel, and waste management companies, and be it further
- RESOLVED 2** That the California State PTA, its units, councils and districts, recommend schools monitor, document and report the savings they create for their school districts as a result of their waste reduction programs, urge school districts to direct these savings back to the school sites to support program sustainability, and recommend that schools report their waste reduction strategies and successes in their school and PTA newsletters, back-to-school packets, websites, and electronic bulletins, and be it further
- RESOLVED 3** That the California State PTA, its units, councils and districts, foster student/teacher-driven participation in paper, glass, and plastic recycling, nurture the growth of school garden programs in which composting of fruit and vegetable waste serves a critical part of the overall waste reduction plan, and advise school district to buy recycled paper productions whenever possible, and be it further
- RESOLVED 4** That the California State PTA, its units, councils and districts, promote integration of waste reduction/garden composting education into the school curriculum with linkage to state standards wherever possible, advocate for teachers, parents and students to attend waste reduction and composting training

workshops, and distribute information on specific ways to inspire and train students and teachers to reduce, reuse, and recycle, and be it further

RESOLVED 5 That the California State PTA, its units, councils and districts, assist teachers, parents and districts staff to become aware of successful California school waste reduction programs in order to help them implement their own site-specific programs, affirm PTAs in recognizing and rewarding outstanding teachers, parents, students and staff who make a significant contribution to their school waste reduction programs, and acknowledge the most outstanding programs at the State PTA level.

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Action by PTA Organizations

Cesar Chavez Elementary, Fourth District PTA
California State PTA Board of Managers

Background Summary

Parents, teachers, students and staff all share their responsibility to leave their world a little better and a little cleaner. Although California school districts are not required to implement waste reduction programs, a number of political factors make the development and implementation of innovative and cost-effective programs possible. The School Diversion and Environmental Education Law (DEEL) mandates a change in the California Education Code to incorporate environmental concepts into the California State Science Framework and curriculum. It also established a grants program for schools, school districts, and county offices of education to promote integrated waste management education and waste reduction programs.

In response to the DEEL initiative, an effective and efficient waste diversion program model was developed for the Davis Joint Unified School District (DJUSD) in 2002. This model –RISE (Recycling is Simply Elementary) – addresses some of the core issues affecting the long term sustainability of school recycling programs, and has been responsible for increased levels of solid waste recycling, organic composting and waste reduction in participating elementary and intermediate schools. The DavisRISE Program has been recognized and promoted by the CIWMB and the Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS) initiative.

Sustainability of the DavisRISE Program is achieved through the reallocation by the DJUSD of the savings derived from decreased solid waste disposal fees for the schools. A portion of savings in solid waste collection and disposal are applied annually toward the RISE Program. In 2003-2004, the first year of implementation, the reduction of solid

waste generation in the schools saved the DJUSD approximately \$31,000 in solid waste costs. Maintaining the approximately 50% reduction in solid waste volumes continues today through the public and private partnership of the DavisRISE Program, (www.DavisRISE.org).

As outlined by the California Integrated Waste Management Board, the most effective way to institutionalize waste reduction practices at the school district level is for the School Board to adopt clear statements of environmental management policy, and for the school district superintendent to adopt best management practices and operating procedures to implement environmental management policy.

A California State PTA resolution in support of environmental management and specifically waste reduction through the environmental “Three R’s” – “Reduce – Reuse – Recycle” would facilitate the institutionalization of waste reduction and environmental conservation practices in California schools. The proposed resolution shall serve to encourage PTAs through the state to participate in the improvement of local environments, the savings of school district resources, the teaching of important skills of California students.

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RESOLUTION E

INDOOR AIR QUALITY (IAQ) IN SCHOOLS

- WHEREAS 1** California has a significant number of unsuitable school facility conditions contributing to poor indoor air quality (IAQ) and is in need of funding to improve indoor air quality; and
- WHEREAS 2** Many schools have poor IAQ including inadequate ventilation, moisture and mold, dust and contaminants such as formaldehyde and volatile organic compounds from finishes, furnishings, pest control, cleaning and instructional materials; and
- WHEREAS 3** Indoor air pollutants can trigger asthma attacks, result in eye, sinus and throat irritation, and lead to “sick building syndrome,” while high and/or prolonged exposures may raise the risk of cancer, heart and lung disease; and
- WHEREAS 4** IAQ problems may affect the health of students and staff and contribute to poor academic performance, absenteeism and learning difficulties; and
- WHEREAS 5** There are multiple solutions for improving and maintaining good IAQ, and resources are available to implement solutions in school construction, renovation, and maintenance; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED 1** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to inform students, parents, school boards, district and school staff, and the community about the importance of healthy IAQ and its relationship to student and staff health, academic achievement and absenteeism; and be it further
- RESOLVED 2** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to work with local school boards to promote good IAQ when building or renovating facilities or using portable classrooms by following guidelines that provide for healthy IAQ, including techniques such as reducing the use of toxic construction materials; and be it further
- RESOLVED 3** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and district to work with local school boards to adopt policies and practices that promote healthy IAQ, including but not limited to the use of IAQ management plans, proper maintenance techniques such as adherence to heating, ventilation and air conditioning system standards, protocols to reduce pesticide use, and the use of low-toxic classroom materials and cleaning supplies; and be it further

RESOLVED 4 That the California State PTA, its units, councils and districts support legislative and regulatory efforts to reduce IAQ pollutants in schools, including securing full funding for IAQ-related assessments, construction, maintenance and repair of school facilities, creating IAQ standards and guidelines for schools, and providing incentives for IAQ-friendly school construction and renovation.

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Action by PTA Organization

Peralta District PTA
California State PTA Board of Managers

Background Summary

Approximately one in every five Californians, more than six million children as well as hundreds of thousands of teachers, administrators and support staff, spend significant amounts of time each day in K-12 classrooms and other school buildings. Healthy school environments are critical to providing the conditions in which teachers can teach, students can learn and schools can be successful.

However, the quality of school indoor air, an obviously critical component of a good school environment, isn't making the grade. The United States General Accounting Office study showed that California ranked last among the states in terms of unsatisfactory indoor environmental issues (such as ventilation and other indoor air quality problems). A later study showed some improvements in the Western U.S., but the region still lagged behind the rest of the nation. Some of these problems are likely associated with the age of California's schools: 73% are over twenty-five years old, and billions are needed for modernization. However, newer school facilities can have serious indoor air quality problems as well.

A 2004 California Air Resources Board study further underscores the need for Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) improvements in traditional and portable classrooms. Many classrooms have inadequate ventilation, elevated levels of air pollutants like formaldehyde and volatile organic compounds, evidence of metals, pesticides and allergens in floor dust, and signs of moisture and mold problems.

Many of the above mentioned indoor air problems contribute to childhood asthma, which is already an epidemic, resulting in school absence. Studies have shown that improved ventilation leads to fewer asthma symptoms. One study reported that there were more asthmatic students in school classrooms with higher concentrations of formaldehyde or other volatile organic compounds. Moisture and mold has also been associated with increased levels of asthma.

Indoor air pollutants can also be an eye, sinus and throat irritant. Higher levels of exposure and/or prolonged exposures may cause cancer, heart and lung disease. Children can be more susceptible than adults to IAQ problems because they have higher respiration rates than adults, which can increase their exposure to air pollutants per unit of body weight.

These potential health problems related to poor indoor air quality can negatively impact student learning and academic performance, and can increase school absenteeism. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, poor IAQ in the school environment “can cause acute health symptoms that decrease performance while at school. In addition, recent data suggest that poor IAQ may directly reduce a person’s ability to perform specific mental tasks requiring concentration, calculation or memory.”

IAQ problems can be both corrected and prevented. Multiple solutions exist for improving and maintaining good IAQ, and resources are available to implement solutions in school construction, renovation and maintenance.

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