

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](http://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 Quick-Reference Guide* and National weekly e-mail information for PTAs [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)
- California State PTA website [www.capta.org](http://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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