

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

As local officers of the largest grassroots child advocacy organization in the state, PTA Legislation Chairs are responsible for demonstrating leadership on children's issues at the local level by educating PTA members, community members and elected officials about PTA's issues of concern and legislative priorities and goals.

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

COMMUNICATE PTA POLICY POSITIONS

- Work with unit, council and district PTA leaders to accomplish these three key advocacy actions:
 1. Schedule at least one meeting per year with your State Assembly and State Senate representatives to discuss your PTA's local issues of concern and legislative priorities of the California State PTA. Organize a delegation of your PTA members to introduce yourselves to these elected officials and to share this information. (See *Advocacy Section of the California State PTA Toolkit and Legislative Alerts* at <http://www.capta.org/sections/advocacy/>.)
 2. Schedule at least one public appearance of the unit, council or district representatives to highlight California State PTA's legislative priorities and local issues of concern. Some examples of appropriate forums are: the local chamber of commerce, school board meetings, local Rotary, Kiwanis or other service clubs.
 3. Submit (with signature of district, council or unit president) at least one letter each year to the editors of local newspapers on behalf of your PTA highlighting California State PTA's legislative priorities and local issues of concern.

- Maintain an up-to-date 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. State representatives can be found at this site: <http://www.capwebworks.com/addresslookup/lookup.aspx>.
- 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.

TAKE ACTION ON LEGISLATIVE ALERTS

- 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 and Member-to-Member updates with other PTA members.

ENCOURAGE PTA MEMBERS TO

- Attend meetings with State Assembly and Senate representatives, 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 federal legislators, when they are in their local district offices.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.)
- Review the *California State PTA Toolkit* Section on Advocacy (available online at www.capta.org, English and Spanish).

REACH OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

- 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 a local school.

EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES TO ACCOMPLISH ABOVE TASKS:

- Obtain California State PTA positions and analyses on statewide ballot measures.
- Observe Legislation Policy #11 (4.2.5k,126), which sets guidelines for sending legislation material home with students.
- Obtain materials from predecessor and unit/council/district president, or if no materials are available, begin a new file that includes the resources listed below under "Resources and References."
- Attend the California State PTA Annual Legislative Conference in Sacramento (usually held in the Spring). Attend other 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.
- 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* with text of California State PTA resolutions is available online at www.capta.org.
 - National PTA Position Statements and Resolutions are available online at www.pta.org.

- Contact district PTA president for further assistance.
- Participate in legislation study groups (How to Make a Study 7.4.2, 288; Forms 369-377).
- Know the calendar for the two-year State Legislative session.
- 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.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- The *California State PTA Toolkit* (available online at www.capta.org, *English and Spanish*)
- The California State PTA *Resolutions Book* (available online at www.capta.org, or contact district PTA leadership for assistance.)
- California State PTA *Sacramento Update* (available for downloading at no cost online at www.capta.org)
- PTA in California* (subscription)
- California State PTA *Communicator* (subscription)
- National PTA *Quick-Reference Guide* (available online at www.pta.org, *English and Spanish*)
- Our Children* (National PTA magazine, subscription)

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