

THIRTY-FIRST DISTRICT PTSA

Valley Views

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2019-2021 VISION FOR 31ST DISTRICT

"I am really excited for our next two years together. We are going to work together to build stronger units, start new ones and implement changes as they come at us. Together, we will take on the challenges that will come our way. We will support our schools' goals and missions. We will support programs that will benefit all of the kids in the 31st District."

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Submitted by Barbara Smith, President

My last article. I should start with a hearty and heartfelt thank you to the Leadership at California State PTA, the 31st District Board of Directors/Board of Managers, the amazing Council Presidents, the Committee Chairs, the Committee Members, and every unit President I had the privilege of working with and for.

Every President had a plan for their term. "I am going to increase membership." "I am going to advocate for children." "I am, I am, I am." Then the term starts, and you discover the power of the words - "We can."

If there ever was a term, that is defined by "We can" and "Why PTA?," it has been the last two years. I just finished my last California State PTA Board of Managers meeting and our President, Celia Jaffe, gave us the perfect analogy - "we are the Apollo 13 team." We had a plan. We took off in our spaceship, and then March 13, 2020, Covid-19 turned our world upside down. All we had to work with different than our normal, difficult to implement, challenging in every way, and scary!



As we packed up our kids and our lives for just a few weeks, we had no idea that it would be over a year before we would all be together again. We didn't know how many loved ones we'd lose along the way. So many of you reached out to me, still working your PTA's, while caring for a sick family member, even as you battled Covid-19 yourselves. I can't begin to tell you how you have touched my heart and made me a stronger PTA advocate. I lost family too, but my PTA family was there to support and help me.

With only a few tools at our side, we built up our community. We learned new technology. We adapted our meetings and our fundraisers. We never stopped supporting our mission to positively impact the lives of all children and families. With Zoom meetings, parents who had never been to a PTA meeting, started showing up. Moving forward, we will go back to in person meetings, or maybe they'll be hybrid meetings, some calling in – some coming in. We have opened new doors. We should celebrate those moments.

"We have never done it that way before." That saying got tossed out the window pretty quickly. During our transition to a new term, handing over the baton of leadership to new Executive Boards, remember your thoughts when you stepped up to lead. What were your "I am" statements and how quickly did they turn into "We can." What do you wish the previous board had done for you? Training, providing you with "binder" containing all the flyers, bylaws, and timelines to make your job easier. If you didn't get a binder - don't repeat history, be the amazing past board who gave the next board everything they needed to succeed.

As we learned this year, just because we always did it that way, doesn't mean that is the way we will do it this year. So, host an awards event, acknowledge your accomplishments, install your new officers, sign up for training. Stay safe, get vaccinated, and remain flexible as potentially more changes are put in place.

It has been my privilege and my pleasure to be your 31st District PTSA President for 2019-2021. Thank you for allowing me to take this adventure with you.

California State PTA: Statement Denouncing Violence Against Asian Americans

Dear PTA Leaders and Members,

California State PTA condemns the Georgia shootings and the recent violence against Asian Americans in our country. Our association stands firmly against racism in all forms and denounces all racial violence.

It is critical that we rise to correct inequities and injustices. California State PTA and our constituent associations remain committed to improving diversity, equity and inclusion throughout our association, schools, and communities and to ensuring the safety, well-being and future of every child and family.

We can build a better future for all our children when we unite as a community, intentionally acknowledging how race, culture, and languages spoken are assets in improving the lives of all children and families.



Celia Jaffe
President, California State PTA

California State PTA: Response to Verdict in Chauvin Trial

From California State PTA

Dear PTA Leaders and Members,

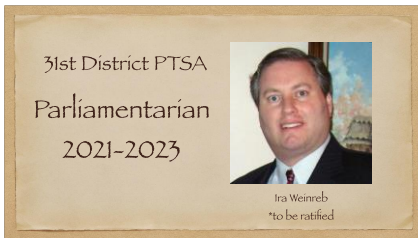
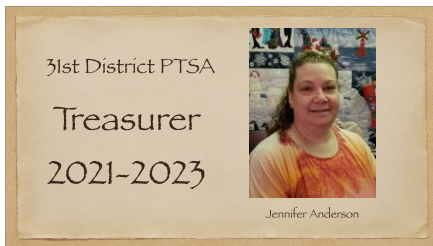
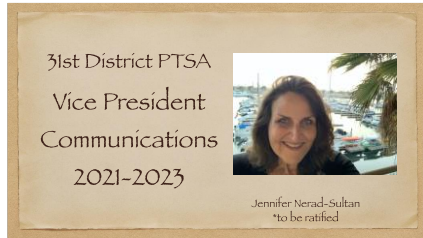
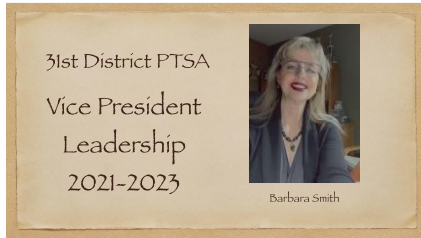
We are a nation traumatized by racial injustice. The murder verdict in the George Floyd case is one important signal that police who use excessive force and discriminatory practices are not above the law. Incidents of discriminatory practices and racial injustice happen not only on our public streets but in our public schools.

As PTA parents and caregivers, we must do everything we can to protect our children from harm. California State PTA urges the California legislature and Governor to thoroughly examine the role and training of police on school campuses to ensure that educators, not police, are responsible for school discipline.

The recent tragic events bring to light once again the pain, distrust, and injustice that are the reality for so many children and families. This cannot continue.



2021-2023 31ST DISTRICT PTSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



AND COUNCIL PRESIDENTS



PTA PARTNERSHIPS ARE CRUCIAL DURING COVID-19

From PTA in California Winter/Spring Edition 2021



Never has it been more evident that schools and families must cooperate in the education of children than during this pandemic. Distance learning requires parents and caregivers to devote part of the home to be a learning space, to be aware to timing of student's online sessions, and at the same time to fulfill their adult responsibilities. The stakes are high, and it is a stressful time for all.

Schools with effective PTAs had strong relationships between students, families and communities before this crisis, and these links have been crucial during the challenges of COVID-19. Regular lines of communication, both formal and informal, are even more vital when staff, students, and families are not occupying the same space. Schools that are linked to the community through

PTA know their families and can help connect resources, educational and otherwise, with students and families in need.

PTA provides a comfortable setting for family members, students, and staff to meet and talk on equal footing – even when those conversations are online or by phone. PTA complements the official structures built into the California public education system, such as LCAP (Local Control and Accountability Plan) Committee, ELAC (English Language Advisory Committee), School Site Council, and so on. In this time of isolation, simply holding conversations among parents and families is a value to the community.

PTA's purposes have always included bringing home and school closer together and advocating for education and well-being of all children. When schools and families act as partners, communicate effectively, and share decision-making, students succeed. If you want to gauge how well your schools and PTA team up with families, take a look at the PTA Guide on Family-School Partnerships. <https://capta.org/focus-areas/family-engagement/family-school-partnerships/>

This year is anything but ordinary. The relationship between families and schools, enhanced by the role of PTA in your community, is incredibly important. Thank you for making a difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Celia Jaffe". The script is fluid and cursive.

President, California State PTA



10 PTA NEW YEAR'S Resolutions

The New Year is a great time to take stock of what you have accomplished and set new goals for the year. And it is clear this year is different! Each January, about one in three Americans resolve to better themselves in some way. We do this as individuals; why not for our PTA? It's a new year—a fresh start and a chance to do great things for children and families.

Here are 10 PTA New Year's resolutions to consider:

1. Resolve to move toward your PTA goals:

- Start now—If you haven't started yet, don't beat yourself up—start now. If you haven't started a membership campaign. Start now. If you haven't decided on programs or a budget. Start now. It's been a strange year, but let's not give up there is a lot we can still do. Don't worry about what you haven't done. Start now.
- Evaluate and redirect if needed. Hold a mid-term board evaluation—take some time to evaluate your PTA goals, activities and budget. There may be some different things your PTA can do this year. Are you holding virtual events? Working with the Principal to make sure students are learning, safe and healthy to the best of our ability. Things are different. Maybe there are new opportunities.

2. Resolve to ask for help, if you need it: There is nothing wrong with asking for help, and this is the perfect time to reach out to your council or district for support. Your district and council PTA leaders volunteer because they want to help, and they would rather help when you ask early while there is still time. Problems tend to get bigger when we ignore them, but can often be resolved quickly when we get some help. We at California State PTA are here for you too and we have resources and training that we love to share. If you have a question or concern—let us know. We are here for you.

3. Resolve to share the fun: Teamwork is one of the great benefits of PTA. Look around to see if there are more people you through can include on your committees, invite to activities or ask to volunteer. Let more people enjoy the privilege of contributing. Especially in these times when we aren't running into to each other at school or the part or grocery store, we might need to put some effort into building those connections.

4. Resolve to share your successes: If things are going well, let us know! Share your stories with California State PTA, your district and your council. Share your accomplishments with your fellow PTA leaders. We are all figuring out new ways to do things—share what you have learned and let's all get through this together. Let's all support each other. It's fun to celebrate the great work you are doing, and it helps give other PTAs ideas and inspiration!

5. Resolve to grow your PTA: Remember membership is a year-round activity. Think about who you haven't asked to join your PTA. Are there new families who have moved into your community or folks you forgot to ask to join? Have all your school-board members joined? Are there a few teachers you can remind? Remember, not every member needs to volunteer. The more members we have, the stronger our voice as we advocate for all children. Make sure you are on TOTEM and share the link and QR code on all your materials.

6. Resolve to try something new: A virtual town hall, a zoom talent show, virtual coffee with the Principal. If your PTA wants to try something new: a new program for the students, a great family engagement activity or a new twist on a tried- and-true program.

7. Resolve to leave a legacy: PTA's legacy is long and substantial because we share our vision. Plan to attend the California State PTA Annual Convention this May. The convention offers great workshops, resources, exhibits, networking opportunities and more. You can participate in the decisions of California State PTA. Build your PTA knowledge and that of your friends and colleagues. It takes all of us.

8. Resolve to learn more: California State PTA has many resources for you. To learn about PTA, schools, school districts, how schools work and how you can best advocate for your child and all children. Check out our resource library, School Smarts Parent Engagement Program, or new resources around membership, programs, and more.

9. Resolve to celebrate: You work hard at the most important job there is—raising the next generation. Having a positive impact on your children and families is worth celebrating. Thank you. We all appreciate all you do!

10. Resolve to stay on track for the next school year: Part of our sustainability is thinking of next year. To keep your PTA healthy, check your bylaws and calendar to ensure you are meeting your target dates for your election meeting in the spring. If you have elected your nominating committee and they are working on nominations for next year's board, you should be in good shape. If you haven't, now is a great time to start working on that.

If you haven't done everything perfectly up until now, you're just like the rest of us (not perfect). Don't beat yourself up about what you should have done—just start fresh and do better from now on. That's the great thing about a new year. It's a fresh start! **Celebrate and thank you!**

HELPING KIDS UNDERSTAND THE RIOTS AT THE CAPITOL

Excerpted from *Child Mind Institute*
in response to the recent events in Washington D.C.

No matter their age, it's important to talk with your children about how the events in Washington D.C. fit into bigger issues of justice, democracy, racism and white supremacy. Take the opportunity to have an honest discussion about racism, that these two groups were not treated equally, and to know that this is an ongoing discussion. This has been happening for longer than just yesterday or the past four years — there is a history and we can talk about that.



TALKING WITH YOUNGER KIDS

Younger kids are unlikely to understand what's happening on TV, but they may still notice that something is up.

- Check in with little kids. It's important that parents take the opportunity to talk about what is happening and not shy away from the topic.
- Remember, kids are listening even when you're not talking to them directly. If you need to vent your frustrations or other feelings, do it when the kids are in bed.
- Use developmentally appropriate language to answer little kids' questions.
- Reassure kids who may have seen disturbing images of violence on TV that they're safe.
- Emphasize the positive. Going back into the Capitol Building our representatives were showing how important our elections are.

TALKING WITH SCHOOL-AGE KIDS

Older kids may have some understanding of what's going on and feel anxious or scared. Modeling a calm, rational response and helping them talk through any fears or worries they have can help.

- Give kids a chance to tell you what they saw and ask questions. It's important to get a sense of what they're thinking and what they already know about what's going on. This also gives you a chance to correct any misinformation they may have heard.
- Validate their feelings
- Emphasize that what the rioters did was not effective, and that there are laws in place to ensure that there are consequences for what they did.
- Help kids avoid black-and-white thinking. Keep your talks with them about the action; do not label the people
- Keep routines in place and try doing something as a family like taking a walk, baking a cake, or making art. Anything that helps keep everyone calm and distracted.

TALKING TO TEENAGERS

For teenagers and young adults, using this as an opportunity to talk about their own rights and responsibilities can be helpful.

- Let them know that it's normal to be angry, sad or frightened when witnessing injustice. Especially for teens who were involved in the Black Lives Matter protests, seeing this situation unfold may be very upsetting.
- Discuss appropriate ways for teens to channel their emotions and fight for what they believe in, no matter their politics.
- Use this as an opportunity to discuss how kids are getting — and vetting — the information they see online and on TV.
- Open a conversation about what they can learn from these events and from the president's actions. Encourage them to talk about what makes a good leader, what are qualities and values we would want in a leader and what a good leader would do in this situation.

To read this article on the Child Mind Institute website, <https://childmind.org/blog/helping-kids-understand-the-riots-at-the-capitol/>

CALIFORNIA STATE PTA CONVENTION RECAP

Submitted by Carla Niño, Valley Views Editor



The virtual California State PTA's 122nd Annual Convention took place May 3 – 15, with convention related activities beginning on May 3, 2021. Hearings for Bylaws, Legislation Policies and Resolutions were held this May 3-7. Workshops, the Reflections Art Gallery, and networking opportunities took place May 3-16. The official Business of the Association was held May 13-16. The Exhibit Hall and Passport Challenge was available from May 13-16.

Although we did not meet in person this year, thousands of PTA leaders, members, and decision-makers from across the state converged online for an exciting and dynamic period of learning and networking. We also had some exciting keynote speakers:

- Julie Lythcott-Haims, author and activist
- Keisa Brown, 2021 California Teacher of the Year
- Leslie Boggs, National PTA President
- A recorded message from Governor Gavin Newsom!

Convention was a wonderful place to ask questions, learn new things, meet new people, and get energized for the coming term. My favorite keynote speaker was Julie Lythcott-Haims who spoke of the importance of resilience and kindness. She is the New York Times bestselling author of the anti-helicopter parenting manifesto *How to Raise an Adult*.

During the Business of the Association, we adopted one Resolution: ***Teaching Hard History – American Slavery in K-12 Education***. Excerpted from the Background Summary.

A 2018 report by the Southern Poverty Law Center found that 97% of surveyed U.S. teachers agree with experts that teaching and learning about slavery is essential. Experts see knowledge of slavery as central “to any understanding of American society... [and] a necessary step in coming to terms with the legacy of race that the American past has bequeathed our students.” Yet students and adults struggle with even the most basic questions about slavery. The report called for deeper coverage in the classroom, better textbooks, and stronger curriculum to provide the detail and historical context students need to make sense of slavery’s origin, evolution, abolition, and legacy. Even in recent years, some textbooks have fallen egregiously shy of the mark; 58% of teachers did not believe their textbook’s coverage of slavery was adequate, and one textbook notoriously referred to enslaved people as ‘workers.’

Armed with a solid and historically sound understanding of slavery, our students will be better positioned to understand their world and how it came to be. They will see that racial disparities in wealth, housing, health, the criminal justice system, and school discipline arose from “systems and structures that restrict choice and limit opportunity” – barriers that “were built on a foundation constructed during slavery.”

Our students will learn where the language and slurs they hear came from and why they persist.

Our students will understand why courageous movements of resistance and hope have arisen throughout American history and how students like themselves can help change the culture around them.

And they will understand not only the cruelties of slavery, but also the triumphs – the courage, resilience, resistance and creativity of enslaved peoples and their descendants, whose contributions profoundly shaped America.

124 Years of PTA Membership

Member Spotlight



Launa Bogartz

President, Mayall PTA

President, Valley Academy of Arts and Sciences PTSA

Treasure, Los Amigos Council

Board of Managers, 31st District PTSA

California State PTA: What is your PTA Resolution/what do you hope PTA does in the coming year?

Launa: My PTA units are working to provide information and resources so that our students and their families feel safe and knowledgeable during this time of virtual learning and uncertainty. We also hope to facilitate the distribution of valuable supplies for learning and self-care to our families and school staff in a safe manner.

California State PTA: How can PTA be more inclusive to all?

Launa: It's always helpful when the executive board has access to family data so we can better assist with needs. We also use staff information and wish lists to be able to encourage families to support and equip our teachers with the supplies they need to help students.

Do you know of someone you think should be spotlighted by California State PTA in the next issue?
Email to membership@capta.org

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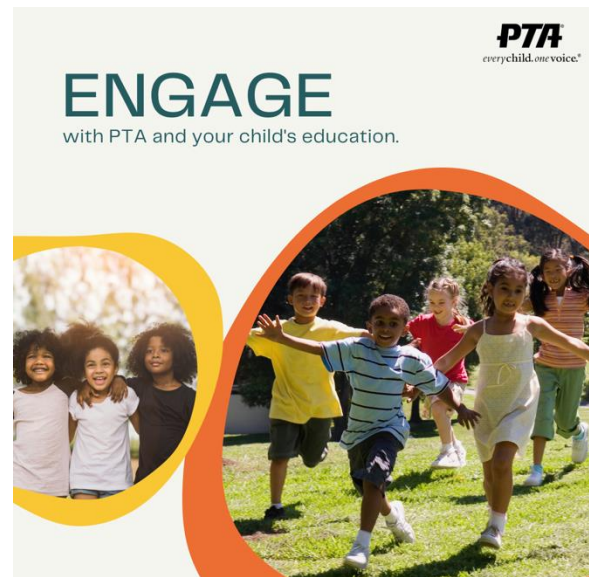
MEMBERSHIP

*From Barbara Smith, President, 31 District PTSA
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31 District PTSA had some Membership success stories. Seventeen schools actually increased their membership over last year. And our numbers while not anywhere near our membership of last year - for the past three months have been higher than they were for the same time last year. So, all in all we finished strong. Look at the California State PTA site www.capta.org for some suggestions on how you can start to get ready for the next Membership Drive over the summer.

The following schools increased Membership

- Danube Avenue Elementary PTA, Los Amigos Council
- Dearborn Street Elementary PTA, Los Amigos Council
- Tulsa Street Elementary PTA, Los Amigos Council
- Birmingham High PTSA, Los Robles Council
- Tarzana Elementary PTA, Los Robles Council
- Granada Hills Charter TK-8, North West Valley Council
- Fair Avenue Elementary PTA, Valley Gateway Council
- Río Vista Elementary PTA, Valley Gateway Council
- Walter Reed Middle School PTSA, Valley Gateway Council
- El Dorado Elementary School PTA, Valley Hills Council
- Haddon Avenue Elementary PTA, Valley Hills Council
- V.O.C.E.S. PTSA, Valley Hills Council
- Capistrano Avenue Elementary PTA, Valley West Council
- Sunny Brea Avenue Elementary PTA, Valley West Council
- TEAM Pomelo PTA, Valley West Council
- Woodlake Avenue Elementary PTSA, Valley West Council



AWARDS

Submitted by: Kristen Foster, Awards Chair

Thirty-first District PTSA held its Annual End of the Year Association and Awards Event virtually on May 20, 2021, celebrating all the achievements that were accomplished over the past two years. Although we have been in the midst of a global pandemic, that didn't stop our members and volunteers from doing great things to serve children in their school communities. It was quite inspiring!

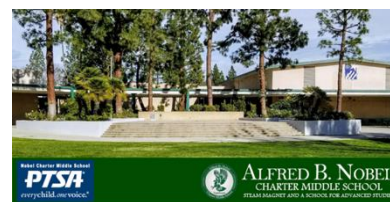
We have six PTA/PTSA units with significant anniversary milestones of fulfilling the PTA mission:

- JFK High School PTSA for 50 years
- Knollwood Elementary School PTA for 60 years
- Anotola Elementary School PTA for 70 years
- Colfax Elementary School PTA for 70 years
- Kester Elementary School PTA for 70 years
- Nestle Elementary School PTA for 70 years

Congratulations on your longevity and thank you for your many years of service to PTA!

We are excited to recognize 17 PTA/PTSA units for excellence with our traditional end of year awards too!

The **Diana Dixon Davis Health and Safety Award** was awarded to Nobel Middle School PTSA!! They prepared COVID-19 safety Kits for teachers and mini kits for the incoming 6th graders when they returned to campus. Additionally, they sponsored an on-campus food pantry for students and families experiencing food insecurities.



This year we offered a **Newsletter Digital Directory Award** which was presented to:

- Valley View Elementary School PTSA
- Walter Reed Middle School PTSA

Both units offered an excellent resource to their school communities digitally with a “one-stop-shop” for everything about the PTA and school community I once place online.



The **Newsletter Honorable Mention Awards** went to

- Toluca Lake Elementary School PTA
- Rio Vista Elementary School PTA

for their beautiful newsletter submissions.



The **Newsletter Grand Award** was presented to

- Burbank Blvd Elementary School!!

This PTA unit is a brand-new PTA unit, recently form in the midst of a pandemic. They did an excellent job of quickly pulling together an informative and extremely well formatted Bilingual Newsletter to serve the need of their school community's.



The **Council Treasurer of the Year** is Gilma Koch from the North West Valley Council. Although we were blessed with a number of excellent Council Treasurers, one really stands out for their attention to detail, their always getting things turned in by the deadline, and for always going the extra mile to help their Units be successful.

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AWARDS

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Teachers of the Year: Our teachers continued to promote PTA/PTSA units at their schools even while they were not on campus. The teachers helped fundraise or to get 100% of the teachers to become PTA members while teaching on Zoom. Traditionally we choose only one winner, but this year we have four outstanding Teachers who consistently promoted and supported PTA and we wanted to honor each of them. Thank you for your dedication to the students that you educate and the PTA organization.

- Mrs. Hobi from Darby Elementary School PTA
- Ms. Wassler from Toluca Lake Elementary School PTA
- Mrs. Fink from Woodlake Elementary School PTA
- Ms. Walgren from Nobel Middle School PTSA

Elementary Honorable Mention Unit of the Year Awards:

These Honorable Mention Unit of the Year Awards go to schools that offer well-rounded programs, service events, educational enhancement, and just enough fundraising to support those programs. They host meetings, they communicate with their administrations and associations, files taxes, follow LAUSD policies and procedures. In short, they are the ideal. What we all try to work toward.

- Toluca Lake Elementary School PTA, Valley Gateway Council
- Andasol Elementary School PTSA, North West Valley Council

Elementary Unit of the Year went to:

- Granada Hills Charter TK-8 PTSA, North West Valley Council

The Unit of the year at the Elementary Level is Granada Hills Charter TK-8 PTSA! In addition to being a very well-rounded unit that is strong in many areas, they were able to send their PTSA membership flying off the charts and provided their students a unique virtual enrichment experience during this extremely challenging school year. We celebrate and honor their commitment to the PTSA mission.



Secondary Honorable Mention Unit of the Year Awards:

I cannot stress enough how difficult it is to remain relevant at the middle and high school levels. We are humbled to honor these two schools. They have blended the best of many programs to enrich and support their unique campus' and we are thrilled they represent PTSA.

- CHAMPS Charter High School PTSA, Valley Gateway Council
- Porter Ranch Community PTSA, North West Valley Council

Secondary Unit of the Year went to:

- Millikan Middle School PTSA
- Millikan Middle School was able to keep their membership up and found having PTSA meetings on Zoom offered them higher attendance than in the past. This year the PTSA founded a new committee in partnership with the school called the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. The DEI committee exists to

address the challenges that we face today to be more diverse, to be more equitable, and to be more inclusive.



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AWARDS

*Presented by Barbara Smith, President 31st District PTSA
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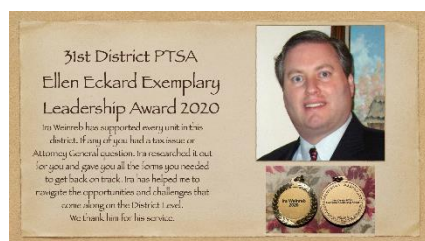
31st District PTSA Linda Hinton Volunteer Award



Nelson is the Valley Gateway Council Treasurer, during 2019-2020 term his Council had a turnover in Council Presidents too long to list. When it seemed like we had exhausted volunteers to take over this position, Nelson stepped up and handled both positions until a President could be appointed. He seamlessly took care of business and when the new Council President stepped in, he supported her efforts to lead the Council. He is an influential leader who sets the tone of commitment to PTA. We appreciate all of his work on behalf of the 31st District.



Tali's commitment to the 31st District PTSA is humbling. She regularly deals with the most dramatic individuals with grace and dignity. She always keeps the District in the loop as to what is going on and goes out of her way to make sure her units and the District are following policy and protocol. She is a strong advocate for children and her community. Her energy, enthusiasm, and dedication that she brings to all meetings make our mission possible.



Ira, how do I begin to thank you. Let's start with a swell award. The Ellen Eckard Exemplary Leadership Award. You have guided and advised me for the past four years. But that was not all, you have guided and advised every unit in the 31st District PTSA. You researched out all tax questions, tackled the Attorney General websites, and questioned everything that seemed out of place. Your leadership is an example to us all. Your ability to explore both sides of an argument allowed our Board of Directors to make fully informed decisions. Thank you for all your work and commitment to the children and families of the 31st District PTSA.

Honorary Service Award



For those of you who have not yet had the privilege of meeting Heidi, please know you will not ever meet a more generous soul. She has tirelessly worked for the 31st District behind the scenes. She has helped support all our events with time and effort and donation of goods and services so that we can raise much needed funds, create a sense of community. During the pandemic, she looked to the community to share what she had so that others could benefit.

She is smart, caring and has a wicked sense of humor. To know it to love her.



Andie chaired the Reflections program which in a "normal" year is hard, training the units, accepting and processing irreplaceable art, music, and dance, arranging for judging, submitting to state. With the pandemic, the precious few opportunities for art and music were set aside. While that seems reasonable to a child who hates Math and English, to a child who only lives to breath for music and art, this was beyond devastating. Andie, shifted gears, working with the California State PTA Reflections Committee and helping facilitate a completely online Reflections Program. Children sang out to us from their living rooms, read us poems from their couches, and danced their hearts out from their own back yards. The submissions took our breath away.

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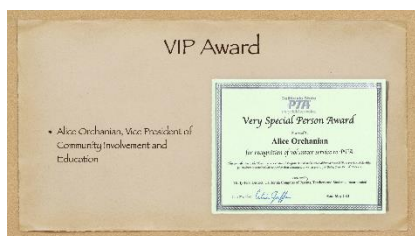
Very Special Person (VIP) Award



The first Everyone should have a Cyndi in their world. She has been my partner in crime since we were children. No matter what we got involved in we always had each other's back. During my term in office, Cyndi stepped up and wore many hats, dinner chair and parliamentarian - whatever needed to be done, always cheering on and supporting the 31st District.



As you move through PTA, you will find yourself surrounded by many amazing people who will lead, teach, and mentor you. I hope that everyone finds their own Heidi Brewington. During my term, she walked me through all things Legislation. She encouraged me and the 31st District to get more involved in policy, established relationships with local representatives and opened doors and conversations that will benefit all families and children.



Alice took on a new role of Vice President of Community Involvement and Education. And she was tasked with developing the position. Then the pandemic hit. And Community Involvement and Education became our only focus. Every month, she brought to us updates on where we could get food, masks, shots, shutdowns. She has worked tirelessly for the mission of California State PTA to positively impact the lives of all children and families for over twenty years and we are all the better for it.

Golden Oak Service Award



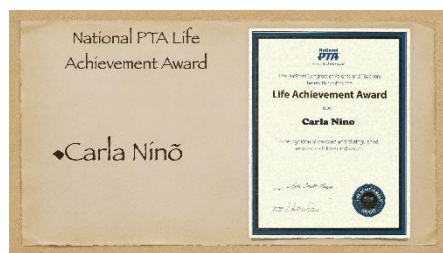
Jennifer Anderson is one of the most amazing, creative, and hardworking women it has been my privilege to meet. She works full time, commits to supporting local Boy Scouts and oh, yea PTA too! She is an incredible Council president, leading Los Amigos successfully. And when another Council President had to step down due to Covid, she volunteered to lead and mentor the units in a second council. There is no mountain too high or river too wide for this lady to build a bridge and ascend to new heights.



I have to be honest I have been planning on presenting this award to Mireira since I meet her. Her skills and abilities knock my socks off. She is going to be an amazing 31st District PTSA President and I am honored I will have the opportunity to support and work for her next term. Mireira is being presented this award because as times change and we need to change with them. Mireira always looks at each activity and says how can we do this

better. She has been planting seeds of inclusivity and diversity for the past several years. She is also expanding the District's social media footprint with her amazing computer wizardry. Effortlessly creating Mireira is our future! She takes all the good traditions we have as a District and honors them, while questioning, how can we do this better.

National PTA Life Achievement Award



Carla is a beautiful soul. She truly cheers on and supports her fellow man, and woman. She has taken our newsletter to new levels. She freely shares her wisdom and guidance. This award is an accumulation of her many years of service to PTA. This is the highest honor from the National PTA and it only goes out to the person who daily shares her commitment to children in her community and beyond. Carla's hard work on behalf of children is a testament to all of us of what we can and should do. Thank you, Carla, for

holding my hand, sharing your wisdom, gently reminding me I still have work to do, and for encouraging tomorrow's leaders to step up and take on opportunities. You make all of us better PTA members. (Last Name actually spelled "Niño")

FAREWELL TO MARILYN ICKES, 31ST DISTRICT BOOKKEEPER AND OFFICE MANAGER

Submitted by Barbara Smith, President

Marilyn Ikes, 31st District PTSA's sweet Bookkeeper and Office Manager, will be retiring at the end of this term. She worked for the District for 30 years and was indispensable. Marilyn, this is the hardest one of all for me to write. You will be missed by all of us.



Over the past 30 years you have guided and trained over seventeen 31st District PTSA Presidents. You have ushered in computers to our office, set up bank accounts, kept us on track with our taxes, and kept our financial books honest.

You have celebrated and cried with us and we have celebrated and cried with you. Because of you, each transition was handled smoothly. You never dropped the ball and didn't let us drop it either. The number of ways you will be missed cannot be counted here.

But we can honor you for your work, your faithful dedication to the 31st District PTSA. It was never about the extraordinary pay we offered you, it was always about the people.



So, okay you were paid staff, but you did so much more for us. You came to work early, stayed late, always had our reports ready for us. You made us look good from behind the scenes. You have been honored several times over your many years, but this one is special - it is the last one; **the 31st District PTSA Ellen Eckard Exemplary Leadership Award for 2021!**

We love you so much. Thank you for 30 amazing years with the 31st District PTSA.



FROM VALLEY GATEWAY COUNCIL

Submitted by Jennifer Forlano, Valley Gateway Council President

A Focus on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

PTA's Diversity Committee at Carpenter Community Charter strives to create an atmosphere of inclusion, acceptance, understanding, and celebration of diversity and differences of all kinds. Throughout the school year, they recognized and celebrated heritage months, buried history and figures, and contributions from marginalized groups within their communities. Some of the observances included Hispanic Heritage Month, Native American Heritage Month, Diwali, Kwanzaa, Lunar New Year, Black History Month, Women's History Month, Every Kid Counts Month/Autism Awareness Month, Asian American Heritage Month, and Jewish American Heritage Month.

Carpenter PTA's Diversity Committee highlighted relevant figures and events and used books, videos, and speakers to create a larger platform for embracing diversity. The DEI committee worked towards inclusion of LGBTQ families, as well as families of kids with different needs. They sought out and organized staff development for teachers, with the goals of inclusion and culturally sensitive teaching practices in mind. They also set up parent education opportunities working towards these same goals.

Carpenter PTA had a yearly fair celebrating all types of diversity represented within their school population. For 2020, they had a virtual version of the fair, highlighting individual families and all the diversity they brought to the school. Additionally, they promoted their school's larger DEI goals, hosting a monthly social justice book club, which all parents and staff were invited to participate in.

Carpenter PTA supports the goals of **Every Kid Counts** (<http://everykidcounts.org/>) that advocates for and educates about diversity, inclusion, and the hope that every child will understand their undeniable value. Though inclusion is a yearlong and lifelong goal, **Every Kid Counts Week** in April included daily activities that promoted inclusion, acceptance, kindness, and awareness. Promotion of these activities can be implemented year-round!



In the distance learning setting, they executed a variety of virtual activities including:

- Worked with volunteers to create a video in sign language
- Highlighted community members who exemplified inclusion in diversity videos
- Highlighted *Black Lives Matter* as justice and equality for everybody
- Created a story time where people read stories from their life.
- Created a book club, hosted by a teacher, choosing books about inclusion
- Had a sign language interpreter present all week for the morning announcements
- Held their first annual inclusive animated short festival and dance party showing films that focused on inclusion and different abilities

Carpenter PTA looks forward to expanding inclusion and diversity until it is just the way things are in the world. They strive to plant the seeds and create a foundation that is inclusive, diverse, accepting, compassionate, empathetic, loving and kind. [Check out their 2021 Every Kid Counts Video - "When Love Takes Over"](#)

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A Focus on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Millikan Middle School PTSA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee set out at the start of the school year to explore ways to expand equity and inclusion amongst Millikan's diverse student body. The committee met roughly once a month and was comprised of a group of dedicated parents and teachers committed to ensuring that Millikan was a safe, respectful, and inclusive place where all students could thrive.

In its first year of existence, the DEI Committee:

- Administered a benchmarking survey to both students and parents
- Provided banners, decorations, and video for World Cultural Diversity Day

Future plans include:

- Launching a speaker series on the topics of equity and inclusion
- Boothing at school events
- Suggesting alternative books and materials for the classroom that are inclusive of many different voices
- Supporting professional development in DEI for teachers.

Fundraising Fun From Valley Gateway Units

Many of our Valley Gateway Units have executed new and successful PTA fundraisers in the off-campus/virtual learning environment while maintaining fun and inclusivity for their students and school communities.

Here are a couple of videos put together to promote their events.

[Toluca Lake Elementary School PTA Move-A-Thon Video](#)

[Rio Vista Elementary School PTA Walk-A-Thon Video](#)



Valley Gateway Council
PTA
Bring your **A** game

NATIONAL PTA: REFLECTIONS WINNERS AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

From California State PTA

National PTA recognized the accomplishments of 13 students from California in the 2020-2021 Reflections program! ***Two of these students receiving an Award of Excellence from National PTA were from 31st District!***

The students receiving an Award of Excellence will be mailed their medallion along with their certificate and a Reflections program book in late-May. The Award of Excellence monetary awards will be shipped, directly by Amazon, roughly the same time as when their awards are mailed.

The Reflections program is about allowing students to express themselves to the theme.

National PTA Reflections - Award of Excellence

Eva Whittemore

Literature - Primary Division

Dixie Canyon Elementary School, **Thirty-First District PTSA**

"Things My Teacher Should Tell Herself"

Artist Statement: Everybody knows that teachers matter, but teachers may not know how much they matter. I named my poem "Things My Teacher Should Tell Herself" because it's hard to do school over zoom and some of the work is hard to do alone. My teacher should tell herself that she's doing her best.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r8Cee2KLineGDZLOEWMeHSUc1YteAyd8/view?usp=sharing>

THINGS MY TEACHER SHOULD TELL HERSELF

I matter because I am funny and smart, kind and caring, thoughtful, helpful, and creative.
I like to laugh. I like to sing. (A lot)

Some mornings I sing, "Good morning, good morning, to you, and you and you!"
I explain things in fun ways like, "I have books next to my computer. My class' books should not be locked up in a shed with a heavy lock and a chain around them."

I make fun assignments. A Grandparents project. Weekly spelling sentences. Cooking classes. An All About Me booklet. Bats and haunted houses.

I feel so frustrated when I'm frozen. But I try to hide it because my students are usually frustrated too.
On those days, I get really excited for yoga!

If the class can still hear me, I just sing. "I'm Waiting!" "I'm Waiting!"

I miss seeing my class in person. And they miss me too.

I MATTER AND I AM AWESOME!

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NATIONAL PTA: REFLECTIONS WINNERS

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National PTA Reflections - Award of Excellence

Amira Olin: Literature - Middle School Division

Walter Reed Middle School, **Thirty-First District PTSA**

"Equity, Equality, Discord and Disunity"

Artist Statement: This poem expresses the importance of not allowing race, color, image, gender and other differences to separate or hinder us individually and as a group. It urges us to speak up and stand up for what is right or what we believe in. We should all strive for equality, inclusivity and equity for a better society because we are all of one world. I matter because I represent society in a world full of disparity. I matter because I exist. I matter because we matter!

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LG2A-tgMVOEC2yzp1IJXf5gndsyh05Jd/view?usp=sharing>

EQUITY, EQUALITY, DISCORD AND DISUNITY

I matter because I am me. Standing tall fearlessly. Knocking down boundaries, adding to the diversity. I'm human, can't you see? Yes, indeed I breathe and bleed. Just like you, don't you see?

I matter because I feel me. Full of passion can't you see? Colors do not define me, therefore do not criticize me! I see you hating me, openly, blatantly! What have I done to thee?

I matter because you see me. Look at you, looking at me. Aren't we similar, you and me? Look at me ... What do you see? Come, try, and understand me, free your fear and anxiety.

I matter because I see me, see you glaring indifferently. Go ahead, try being me. Now do you comprehend me? Stop staring at me suspiciously! Infuriatingly, insignificantly, I fear you more than you do me!

I matter because I want to be free. To live in peaceful harmony. In this world around me, fearlessly, and with dignity. Filled with diversity and equality. Fighting for the right to be me, genuinely, uncompromisingly.

I matter because I see we, unflinchingly, irrefutably. Undefined by shape or size. Something most don't realize. Our bodies beautiful and divine, from our waist and eyes to our hips and thighs. You have no right to criticize!

I matter because I see your lies. Looking for perfection in other's eyes. Too fat, too skinny, too short, too tall. Too round, too straight, too dark, too light. Don't have to please, your expectations high. Something you still fail to realize! Is what you want the world to visualize?

I matter because I see me. The me that I see, not the me that you see. I see me, *a being*, don't you see? I cry, I weep passionately. Like you, I feel pain indiscriminately. My tears, like acid, burning inside me. Can you really see the me I see?

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NATIONAL PTA: REFLECTIONS WINNERS

Amira Olin: Literature - Middle School Division

Walter Reed Middle School, **Thirty-First District PTSA**

"Equity, Equality, Discord and Disunity"

continued from previous page

I matter because I think deep. Like toxic poison designed to seep. Into our brains making us weep. As darkness consumes our reality. A future destroyed, with one sweep of a decision made inconsiderately. Inconceivably! Unforgivably! A future lost in futility!

I matter because I am me. Trying to fit in you see ... Trying to be what you want me to be, despondently, failing miserably. Forgotten and shunned by society. What is it you want from me! Why can't you just let me be?

I matter because I am me. The only me that I can be. Not the me that you want me to be. One world, one unit, a symphony. Living in peaceful harmony. No disparity, no disunity, just equality, equity, and inclusivity.

To view all the **2020-2021 National PTA award winners**, including Reflections winner videos and a virtual exhibit, visit <https://www.pta.org/home/programs/reflections/awards>

The annual Reflections theme is created by a student and selected two years in advance through National PTA's annual theme search contest. The 2021–2022 Reflections theme is *I Will Change the World By...* submitted by Lydia Keel from Spanish Fork Junior High School PTSA in Utah.





LEADERSHIP

Submitted by: Kimberly Amado, Vice President for Leadership

Hopefully your unit has held elections for next year's board. Please utilize this time to get your board-elect up to speed and begin the transition process. Include them in your last board and association meetings so they can see how the process works. As they begin to plan and compile the budget for next year, give them a history and your insight to your PTA. Begin to gather and organize all your PTA materials to turnover to your predecessor.

We understand that not all units will be able to conduct elections by the end of the term, but your current officer's term does not automatically extend. Just know that when school resumes, 31st District will need to facilitate the elections as you will not have any current officers to conduct elections.

In addition to all the training classes that were offered at the statewide convention, **31st District Officer Training will take place via Zoom from June 21st-24th**. The district training schedule is below, all classes start at 6:00 pm and there is no charge to attend. Please encourage all of your new board members to attend training. Meeting handouts will be emailed to participants prior to class.

Classes Offered:

6/21 – President
6/22 – Treasurer
6/23 – Secretary
6/24 – Auditor

Register:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAkdO-vrTktGdW9Zvc2WBuenPL_67u1uQNs



VIRTUAL MEETINGS UPDATE

From California State PTA

At the start of the pandemic, we allowed units, councils, and districts to hold their meetings via a virtual format. We have made the change to our bylaws reflecting this change.

If you have not amended your unit or council bylaws to account for virtual meetings, California State PTA has extended the deadline to December 31st, 2021.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your council or district, or email leadership@capta.org.



MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Submitted by Jenny Smith, Music Scholarship Chair

We had many wonderful entries for the Music Scholarship Program this year. Our young musicians were hungry to perform again and submitted everything in an online format. We revamped the entire program with online forms, audition video files, the judges stepped up and reviewed all of the entries. Each scholarship recipient received \$300 to further their musical studies. As a new Music Scholarship Chair, I am so grateful for the Music Scholarship Committees support and direction.



Next year, be on the lookout for a full program of in person auditions and an amazing concert of these fine musicians. Here are the results in from our Music Scholarship Judges.

Jasmine Forooghi: Taft High School, Grade 11, Violin

Jasmine plans to major in violin performance at a music conservatory. "As I got a late start in learning the violin, I hope to enrich myself through summer music programs such as the Meadowmount School of Music. She would love to play at Carnegie Hall and would be ecstatic to play the Musikverein in Vienna, Austria."

Justine Punyataweekul: Valley Academy of Arts and Sciences High School, Grade 11, Vocalist

Justine's goals regarding her career in the musical arts are just to go out there and play. "Small venues, small clubs, big venues, big clubs; it honestly doesn't matter to me as long as I get to express myself through music and words as well as share that with people." Her ultimate "dream" is to form a band and front with vocals and possibly guitar.

Rachel Heo: Granada Hills Charter High School, Grade 10, Piano

Currently, music is just something Rachel does in her free time. "I hope to continue playing the piano for other people and learn to play the guitar."

Aroa Kim: Granada Hills Charter High School, Grade 11, Piano

Aroa would like to compose piano soundtracks for animation films. "Animating is something I'm always excited about and as I pursue animation, or even the short animation film that I'm currently working on, I think it would be wonderful to have full control of the final animation project with my own compositions."

Macgyver Cottrell: Taft High School, Grade 10, Trombone

Macgyver wishes to play on albums. "I wish to reach a point where I have refined my skills enough to virtually play any piece of repertoire through practice." He plans to minor in a music study in college along with a major in business administration. "Even though it may not be my main source of income, I do wish to play gigs and participate in recordings either in the classical, jazz or modern fields of music."

Sophia Manukyan: Granada Hills Charter High School, Grade 10, Piano

Sophia's goals include expanding her knowledge of music, continuing piano lessons, and studying music in college.

Chalet Brannan: CHAMPS High School, Grade 10, Vocalist

"My goal is to be able to perform alone and stay on the right pitch. I would also like to be able to create music and become an artist."

SOCIAL MEDIA THEME KIT: MENTAL HEALTH

From California State PTA



PTA's monthly Social Media Theme Kits are a toolbox of images and text that you can copy and use on your unit/council/district's social media accounts. <https://capta.org/socialmediakits/>

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. PTA is dedicated to expanding mental health supports and services for our kids. As parents, we know what it takes to keep a child physically healthy — nutritious food, exercise, immunizations — but the basics for good mental health aren't always as clear. The first "basic" is to know that children's mental health matters. We need to treat a child's mental health just like we do their physical health, by giving it thought and attention and, when needed, professional help.

PTA Hashtags: #PTA4Kids #AllChildren

Campaign Hashtags: #mentalhealth #mentalhealthawareness #selfcare #mentalhealthmatters #stigmafree

Download the May images here:

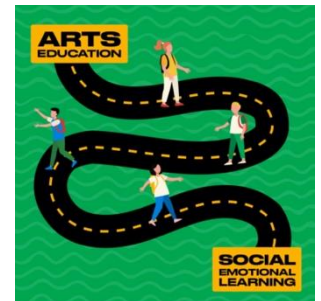
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1gIYEmeCRYWUyN1xixqlbE7aq4UmCVsrs?usp=sharing>

What's in This Month's Kit:

- For Social Media Platforms:
 - Facebook and Instagram – sample posts and customizable images, page cover image
 - Twitter – sample posts and customizable images
- Bonus Materials
 - Themed Zoom background
 - <https://capta.org/focus-areas/health-safety/mental-health/>

Arts Education Is A Pathway for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

So many of us are suffering from some level of trauma whether from poverty, racism, systemic oppression, PTSD, exposure to violence, chronic stress, or seemingly benign neglect. Telling and re-telling our stories, expressing ourselves through the arts, being a witness to other people's pain through their art and allowing ourselves to be seen through our art are powerful ways to relieve our suffering. Our world is in need of healing right now. Providing arts in schools is one way we can support the healing of a population reeling from many forms of trauma.



The arts are unique in decreasing students' stress and anxiety, as well as processing this moment. As students return to in-person learning, arts education needs to part of students' SEL activities. Give students the tools to re-enter school and process joyfully! Share our arts and SEL video with teachers, parents, school administrators and school boards. This is the moment when students need arts education the most. #ArtsEdRebuilds #CreativityIsNotOptional.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9TT1ohVh88>

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1zG65EdnBCJDwWTwQKKMbJEwZZnVBUXQmTur4orGU4q4/edit#slide=id.g4aaf703ecd_0_113

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS



KIDS' HEALTH: IT'S UP TO ALL OF US

From California State PTA

Families, teachers and researchers know that our kids can't grow, learn and succeed when they're not healthy. That's why California State PTA members are dedicated to promoting effective health education programs and services in schools and communities in order to offer children, youth and families the skills, tools and abilities they need to make healthy choices.

Through action in the State Capitol, in our schools and in our neighborhoods, concerned California parents and community members advocate for statewide health programs, and we actively participate on a wide variety of statewide committees addressing mental, physical and environmental health issues.

Our current efforts include:

- Supporting immunization legislation to protect vulnerable children <https://capta.org/focus-areas/health-safety/health-care-and-immunizations/>
- Promoting comprehensive health education taught by qualified personnel as an integral part of the core school curriculum
- Supporting efforts to provide equal access to quality, affordable, basic and preventive healthcare for all children, youth, pregnant women and their families
- Supporting solutions that enable all children with chronic illness or other healthcare needs to be safe in California schools, such as by promoting education of parents and school personnel on the complexities of disease management
- Educating families to recognize the importance of a healthy environment and the potential dangers that environmental contamination poses for children's developing minds and bodies.
- Bringing greater awareness of behavioral-health issues and social-emotional development through collaborating with the school community and creating a full range of services to help all kids thrive.

It's up to all of us to bring concerned people, agencies and organizations together to act on the urgent health needs of California's children: the bright future of our Golden State. Stay on top of the developments and get involved with our free email alerts (<https://capta.org/join/join-our-mailing-list/>) and stay in touch with your local PTA (<https://capta.org/join/find-your-local-pta/>) for the latest information on health issues and programs at your school.

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HEALTH AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS

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Stress and Your Child

This is an ideal time to look at ways to alleviate stress for ourselves and those around us. The past year brought untold stresses to everyone - students, parents and community members alike - as we learned to deal with COVID-19, being sheltered in place, remote learning, and working from home.

April and May brought the reopening of schools, the widespread administration of vaccines, and our reemergence into society, but these changes may bring new stresses for our kids and teens. Here are five things you should know about stress, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):

- Stress affects everyone.
- Not all stress is bad.
- Long-term stress can harm your health.
- There are ways to manage stress.
- If you feel overwhelmed by stress, ask for help from a medical professional.

For a flyer with more information, https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/stress/19-mh-8109-5-things-stress_142898.pdf

Stress and Children

It's important for parents to help their kids learn the skills necessary to deal with their own stress. Part of knowing how to handle stress and preventing it from getting worse is to help your child learn their own limits and understand what they do and don't have time for. Some suggestions:

- Talk with your child and evaluate whether they have too many things on their plate and decide how to incorporate down time in their everyday life.
- If unexpected events and changes cause stress, sit down with your child and discuss creating a routine to be followed every day.
- Figure out what activities and hobbies are good de-stressors for your child and actively recommend that they do that thing when you notice they are stressed.
- Be a good role model: Learn how to deal with your own stress and demonstrate healthy coping methods like deep breathing and calming self-affirmations.

Resources

For more ideas of how to help your child cope with stress, check out the following resources:

- How parents can help teens manage with stress <https://blog.cincinnatichildrens.org/healthy-living/child-development-and-behavior/7-ways-parents-can-help-their-teens-manage-stress>
- How can we explain stress and how it affects us to our kids? This helpful video made by the BBC is a great resource to explain stress and how to reduce it <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnpQrMqDogE>
- How can we help our kids cope with stress and calm down? See this helpful poster with tips from the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI): https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Calm-Down_Poster_EN.pdf

ADVOCACY INSIDER

The Legislature Tackles the Digital Divide



The need for robust broadband is front and center on the California Legislative agenda this year as the pandemic forced heightened awareness about inequities of the digital divide. Children and families struggle throughout the state to use the internet for work and school.

Here is a quick rundown of some of the bills the legislature is considering:

California Advanced Services Fund

AB 14 prioritizes the deployment of broadband infrastructure in California's most vulnerable and unserved rural and urban communities by extending the ongoing collection of funds deposited into the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) to provide

communities with grants necessary to bridge the digital divide.

Status: PTA Supports

SB 4 will secure continuous funding and implement a number of critically needed reforms to the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF). These changes will help close the digital divide and meet the connectivity needs of Californians, both during this unprecedented pandemic and for decades to come. SB 4 will update the CASF by making communities eligible for grants based on their true internet need, promoting deployment of high-speed, 100mbps broadband, and making it easier for local governments to apply for grants and finance their own infrastructure. **Status: PTA Supports**

Statewide Bond for 2022 Election

AB 34 proposes the California Broadband for All Bond Act of 2022 for the November 8, 2022 General Election ballot. It prioritizes underserved and disadvantaged communities. **Status: The California State PTA is conducting a study of this bill**

California Connect Program

AB 1176 requires the Public Utilities to develop, implement, and administer the California Connect Program to ensure that high-speed broadband service is available to every household in the state at affordable rates. **Status: The California State PTA is reviewing this bill**



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National PTA Legislation Conference Recap

National PTA hosted its annual Legislation Conference this year March 9-10. Conducted virtually for the first time, it attracted nearly 700 PTA members nationwide. *Included in that number were 80 members of the California State PTA.* The California contingent was split up into 14 teams. They were able to meet with the offices of both our Senators as well as over 30 Congressmembers. In addition to the virtual Hill Visits, they participated in a number of workshops and presentations on improving advocacy, empowering parents to take action on climate change, school nutrition, employing inclusive and supportive practices, supporting parents during the pandemic, and more.

Critical issues they spoke about with legislators in their virtual visits included:

- Including schools in any comprehensive infrastructure package.
- Improving the federal school meal program through Child Nutrition Reauthorization.
- Supporting policies to protect all students, including students from historically marginalized populations and communities.

Please contact our Federal Advocate, Derby Pattengill, at dpattengill@capta.org with any questions regarding PTA advocacy at the federal level.

National PTA: PTA Calls on Congress and the Administration to Increase Federal Investment in Public Education

National PTA believes the long-term success of our nation depends on quality federal investments in our education system. PTA believes that every student—regardless of their family’s income—must have access to a safe, welcoming, and high-quality public school.

There are over approximately 100,000 public K-12 school facilities serving our nation’s teachers and children across the country. The average school building is over 44 years old. Our nation’s public schools are the second largest national infrastructure sector for capital investment. Yet, historically, unlike roads and bridges, school facilities have received virtually no federal investment.

Given state budget shortfalls and the need for economic recovery, now is the time for the federal government to invest in school infrastructure.

- Address health hazards including poor air quality, substandard heating and cooling equipment, unsafe drinking water supply and lead contamination
- Enhance digital infrastructure to ensure equity
- Redesign schools to meet community needs such as school-based health clinics, after school and summer learning opportunities, and career technical education facilities for children and adults.
- Modernize schools, including making them green, so their energy consumption and carbon footprints are reduced.

<https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/advocacy/2021/public-policy-priorities-letter.pdf>

WHAT'S NEW IN THE RESOURCE LIBRARY?

From California State PTA



PARENTS AS LEARNING PARTNERS

Digital Youth Divas

What roles do you play in your child's STEM learning? In this activity, mark the roles you play frequently with a sticker or a check.

Parents do so much! Recent research has identified a number of different critical roles that parents and other caring adults can play to support a child's STEM learning. The Digital

Youth Divas is an out-of-school program that engages middle school girls, especially those from non-dominant communities, in design-based engineering and computer science activities driven by a narrative story. The program supports girls to develop STEM identities by participating within face-to-face and online spaces to design, create, and re-imagine everyday artifacts (jewelry, hair accessories, music) and activities (dancing and talking to friends) using techniques including collaboration, critique, circuitry, coding, and fabrication.



<http://digitalyouthnetwork.org/divas/>



Stem Education in California

Learn more about California's commitment to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/sc/stemintrod.asp>

Why Art? Posters and Banners

Download and print the Arts=Opportunity's new WHY ART? posters to hang in your classroom, library, or office. Feel free to customize the tools and make them your own.

<https://www.csusm.edu/artopp/toolkit/index.html>



Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, and Performing Arts: A New Arts Guide by California State PTA and Create/CA Lunch Bites

The Lunch Bites Podcast looks at the Parent's Guide to Arts Education in CA Public Schools with special guests from CA State PTA's partners.

<https://anchor.fm/steam-symposium/episodes/Dance--Media-Arts--Music--Theatre---Performing-Arts-A-New-Arts-Guide-by-CAPTA--CREATECA-with-Sarah-Anderberg--Jesus-Holguin---Erin-Jenks-ess58n/a-a4vhdrn>

THE ARTS: BECOME AN ARTS EQUITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

From California State PTA



By asking your district to add more funding, more professional development for staff, or dedicate more rehearsal, studio, and practice space in schools, you'll pave the way to becoming an Arts Equity District.

The Los Angeles County Office of Education, Santa Ana Unified School District, San Francisco County Office of Education and many others have all become Arts Equity

Districts, and are making strides toward getting more arts education in their schools.

Here are some steps you can take to encourage your district to become an Arts Equity District:

- Create a community advisory committee with local classroom teachers, arts providers, other PTA leaders, and community advocates.
- Determine what “equity” looks like for your community. Use specific examples.
- Have the community advisory group review arts programs as they are proposed to make sure that they are increasing access to all the arts.
- Promote your great work on social media!

How to Become an Arts Equity DISTRICT

The Model Resolution to adopt the Declaration outlines the following actions districts can take to signal their commitment to a creative education for all students:

- Post the Arts Equity District badge on the district’s website and social media channels.
- Ask staff members to encourage students to participate in arts education as part of their classes and through visual and media arts, music, dance and theatre arts courses.
- Understand and analyze the district’s secondary school data in the California Arts Education Data Project and reporting the findings at a board meeting.
- Use the data project findings to support the establishment of a strategic arts plan to achieve the Declaration’s goals.
- Dedicate appropriate resources to support genuine arts engagement, production and appreciation – such as using academic materials that align with state standards, creating or adding staff positions and providing suitable facilities that allow students to participate in visual and performing arts, music and associated arts education.



<http://www.createca.dreamhosters.com/home/declaration-of-student-rights/#artsequitydistrict>
<http://www.createca.dreamhosters.com/artsed-dataproject/>



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

From California State PTA

Three Tips for Year-Round Engagement

INVOLVEMENT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE – Research shows family engagement is a major factor in student success, with an encouraging home environment serving as a bigger factor in student achievement than a parent's income, education level or cultural background. Engaged parents take part in all aspects of their child's education and development from preschool to high school. And with parent involvement as one of the eight key areas in the new Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs), authentic family engagement in schools is vital for school improvement and student achievement.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION IS KEY — Strong interaction, teamwork and partnership between families and teachers creates the optimal environment for student success. Parents can make a difference by staying up-to-date on classroom and school news, attending school events whenever possible and addressing concerns or questions honestly, openly and early on.

PARENT-ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND – New state laws and standards mean new opportunities for parents to get involved in the education process. Parents' advocacy, involvement and feedback on school priorities are required as part of the new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and related Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs), making family engagement more important than ever before. Families can contact their school districts to make their voices heard in the LCFF/LCAP process. In addition, parents can contact their schools to see if they offer the California State PTA's award-winning School Smarts Parent Engagement Program, which offers family-friendly training on California's education system and how parents can be effective advocates for their children and schools.

Research Briefs: Family Engagement in the Home and in School

Harvard Family Research Project: *Family Involvement Makes a Difference* is a set of research briefs that examines one set of complementary learning linkages: family involvement in the home and school. The briefs in this series examine family involvement in early childhood, elementary school, and middle and high school settings. Taken together, these briefs make the case that family involvement predicts children's academic achievement and social development as they progress from early childhood programs through K–12 schools and into higher education. <https://globalfrp.org/Archive>



Seeing is Believing: Promising Practices for How School Districts Promote Family Engagement: Harvard Family Research Project and the National Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) have teamed up to bring you this ground-breaking policy brief that examines the role of school districts in promoting family engagement. https://s3.amazonaws.com/rdcms-pta/files/production/public/Issue_Brief-SeeingisBelieving.pdf



WATCH THE LATEST EPISODE OF "INSIDE CALIFORNIA EDUCATION"

California State PTA is pleased to be a sponsor of the Inside California Education TV series (<https://insidecaled.org/about-us/>), which takes an in-depth look at education, and explores the issues and stories which students, parents, educators, community leaders and residents of the state will find informative and interesting.

We encourage you to watch the premier episode of season 4, which takes a powerful and poignant look at the mental health and well-being of students and explores several innovative programs and approaches schools are utilizing to promote mental health. <https://insidecaled.org/videogallery/video/episode-401-focusing-on-mental-health-teaching-yoga-in-a-pandemic-online-suicide-prevention-efforts-mental-health-professionals-on-campus-2646/>

- Watch as a teacher in Elk Grove USD in Sacramento County shares how she is using yoga to help her students balance their mental and physical health during the pandemic.
- See how students in one Los Angeles County school district benefitted from having a mental health professional on every campus.
- See students in a high school class in Chula Vista share their creative projects and reflections from a classroom unit they engaged in to help surface mental health and social-emotional challenges.

Learn what's behind a new online suicide prevention training effort called LivingWorks Start, developed in partnership of the California Department of Education and San Diego County Office of Education. It's available to help school districts and their students all over California.

<https://www.livingworks.net/start>

The Importance of Civics Education: Board of Managers member and past Vice President of Education Mary Perry recently wrote an article for Ed100 entitled, "Are California Students Prepared for Citizenship?" Read an excerpt <https://capta.org/the-importance-of-civics-education/>





Science is Leading the Way to Reopen Schools

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented immense and immediate challenges for schools across the country. Seemingly overnight, teachers and administrators had to rework their curriculum, shift to online learning, and find ways to engage students of all ages from behind a screen. At the same time,

students and parents worked to quickly acclimate to the virtual environment, juggling jobs, school and childcare—all during a global pandemic.

From the beginning of her tenure as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director, one of the top priorities for Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH, and the CDC, has been getting students back into the classroom safely. The science tells us that in addition to education, in-person learning gives our children access to the vital social and mental health services that prepare them for success in our world. That is why CDC strongly believes schools should be the last place to close and the first place to open, to ensure no child goes without these essential services.

We know that students from low-resourced communities, students from ethnic and racial minority communities, and students with disabilities are disproportionately affected by the loss of in-person instruction. By following the science and engaging with partners, CDC has worked to develop guidance and resources to ensure that every student can learn in the classroom safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Science Is Leading the Way in how we respond to COVID-19, including how to get our children back into classrooms during the pandemic—while prioritizing the safety of students, teachers, and school staff. Before developing guidance to safely reopen schools, CDC conducted an in-depth review of all the available data and engaged with educational and public health partners to hear first-hand from parents and educators about their experiences and concerns. Dr. Walensky has personally heard the concerns expressed by both parents and school leaders, which ranged from concerns about potentially lost academic progress to anxiety about personal and family safety if returning to in-person instruction.

These discussions, in combination with the latest science, provided the data needed to develop a strategy for students to safely return to schools in different parts of the country, with varying classroom sizes and resources. The CDC released the **K-12 Operational Strategy** for in-person instruction based on evidence that showed K-12 schools could operate safely for in-person instruction if they used layered prevention strategies. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html>

Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH is the 19th Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the ninth Administrator of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

<https://ptaourchildren.org/science-is-leading-the-way-to-reopen-schools/>



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Valley Views

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