

The Contra Coaster

32nd District PTA

A publication of the 32nd District PTA,
serving Contra Costa County

PTA[®]

everychild. one voice.

Sue Woodworth-Bennett, President

Maureen Chang, Editor

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October/November 2007

From Our President

Fall is here, our kids are back in school, and we've had a month or so to settle into our PTA positions. We've had the time to assess our situations, to figure out what we know, and more importantly, *what we don't know*.

One of the benefits of being part of PTA is belonging to a larger organization. You're not alone, rattling around out there by yourself. Each school or unit belongs to a council. A complete listing of the councils and the school districts they represent is on page 2. Six councils make up 32nd District PTA, which encompasses all of Contra Costa County.

The role of the councils and districts is to support our schools or units. We do that by offering regular training sessions. Many of you attended our Leadership Academy this summer, and our classes at the October general meeting. In addition, some of our councils provide training as well. And there is always convention, which will be held in Long Beach from May 1st - May 4th.

However, I realize that we can do more, much more. The 32nd District leadership team would be more than happy to come out and hold additional training sessions in your area. All you need to do is ask. We would love to take our "dog and pony show" on the road to meet you, and to help you make a difference in all of our children's lives.

Happy Halloween!

Sue Woodworth-Bennett
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I have found the best way to give advice to your children is to find out what they want and then advise them to do it.

Harry S. Truman

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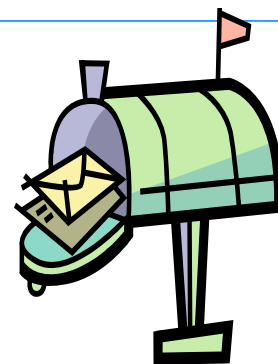
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San Ramon Valley Council	Denise Jennison	925-648-1141	cmjenn@pacbell.net

Keep Communications

Coming to your PTA

32nd District PTA is committed to supporting its councils and units by improving communication, but to do this, we need you to provide your officer contact information in a timely manner.



Please check the label on this newsletter.

If any of the information is incorrect and/or you are no longer the person who should be receiving this newsletter please contact me at chnggng@aol.com or 925-743-0464.

Maureen Chang, VP Communications

A Message from Our County Superintendent of Schools

You may have read recently in the newspaper or heard on the radio or television that public education was one of the few programs that remained whole in the state budget. I am speaking of the state budget that was 55 days late. The fact that public education was protected is pure political rhetoric.

When I graduated from high school in California in 1966, California was fifth in the nation in terms of resources and funding for public education. To hear today that public education was protected, it means that we did not lose our position among the states, and we are still 43rd among the 50 states with regard to our funding for K-12 education. The entire state budget increase for this year was 1.3%. The increase for K-12 increase was a mere 0.5%. Needless to say, we should not celebrate the fact that we were fortunate to maintain our position of 43rd in the nation.

Recently, the state superintendent of public instruction, the governor, the legislature, and the state board of education requested adequacy studies, called “Getting Down to Facts,” which were designed for California policy makers and others with comprehensive information about how the state finances schools and governance to lay the foundation for conversation and future reform. Over 20 separate research projects were completed to answer the following three questions:

1. What do California school finance and governance systems look like today?
2. How can we use the resources we have more effectively to improve student outcomes?
3. To what extent are educational resources needed so that California students can meet the performance goals that we have set for them?

The studies were funded from grants from the Gates Foundation, the Irvine Foundation, and the Stuart Foundation. Additionally, the secretary of Education, Dr. David Long, has hosted regional meetings throughout the state to seek input regarding reform in education. At each of his regional meetings, the need for educational funding and resources was loud and clear.

The governor has proclaimed 2008 to be the “Year of Education”; however, he has also stated that he will not spend more money until reform occurs. Apparently, he is ignoring the vast reform underway during the past nine years and the heart of the message that was borne out of the studies that he requested. His preliminary budget for 2008-09, which will be unveiled in January 2008, will give us a glimpse of his notion of reform without any additional funding. It is important for all of us to become familiar with “Getting Down to Facts” (the full text of the studies can be found at www.irepp.net) and be prepared to review and comment on the governor’s preliminary budget in January. PTA at the local, district, and state levels is the perfect venue to accomplish these tasks.

Joseph A. Ovick, Ed.D.,
Superintendent of Schools, Contra Costa County

Legislative Updates

PTA and Elections

PTA is nonpartisan and never endorses or opposes any candidate for public office.

As tax exempt organizations, PTAs may not support or oppose any political party or candidate, including those running for school boards and nonpartisan slates. Participation in these types of activities will endanger the organization's nonprofit status with the IRS. (*Toolkit – Section 1, Basic Policies for All PTAs, 1.3.3 Nonpartisan Policy*)

PTA does take positions on issues that affect children and youth.

One of the purposes of PTA is to secure adequate laws for children and youth. This means law making at all levels, including ballot measures. It is PTA's responsibility to disseminate as much factual, objective information as possible during election campaigns to help the community make informed choices.

A position adopted by the California State PTA on a statewide measure is the official PTA position for all district, council and unit PTAs.

Any local unit, council or district PTA may participate in the campaign in support of the PTA position without a vote or other formal action by their board or membership.

If the California State PTA has taken a position on a ballot measure:

Local PTAs are strongly encouraged, but not required, to work actively for the PTA position; but a unit, council, or district PTA may **not** take action in opposition to the position.

A current or former PTA officer/board member must not use his/her title, the name of the PTA or the trademark of PTA to take action in opposition to the official California State PTA position. (*Toolkit – Section 4, Advocacy, 4.2.5f Policy 6*)

PTAs may participate in the campaign in a number of ways, but must comply with the non-partisan policy requirements that bind all PTAs and with any state and federal laws and reporting requirements that apply.

Some things PTAs can do in election campaigns:

Publicize campaign issues through use of e-mail, telephone

trees, and mailings to members, hold meetings, provide speakers to present the PTA position, distribute campaign materials in public places or door-to-door, write letters to the editor of your local newspaper.

The PTA may provide volunteers to work phone banks or in other activities at the campaign headquarters, and in activities such as 'Get Out the Vote'. Encouraging community members to register and then to vote are important contributions for improving conditions for our children and the future of California.

Participate in a candidates' forum:

While PTAs do not take positions on candidates for public office, they may engage in informational activities such as candidates' forums. Often this is done jointly with other organizations such as the League of Women Voters. (*Toolkit – Section 4, Advocacy 4.3.2*)

Some cautions to observe in distributing campaign information:

Unless your PTA has the permission of your local school board, you are not permitted to send campaign literature home with students. (*See Toolkit Section 4, Advocacy 4.2.5, Policy 11*)

If campaign material is distributed at a meeting that is held at a public school, be sure to obtain a civic center permit from your school district.

Cautions in use of PTA funds:

PTA funds may be used to prepare, print, or mail campaign literature, but this expenditure must be authorized by a vote and recorded in the minutes. A complete and accurate record must be kept of all PTA campaign expenditures. State law prohibits use of public resources, even if the school district permits it.

PTA does not directly finance election campaigns or divert PTA funds to any other organization, including campaign organizations. However, PTA members may, as individuals, donate to a campaign if they choose to do so. A PTA may invite its members to contribute to a campaign, as long it does not appear coercive or expected

Additional guidelines for PTA leaders:

PTA leaders who are considering taking a leadership role on behalf of a candidate are strongly urged to avoid even the appearance that their private activities have, in any

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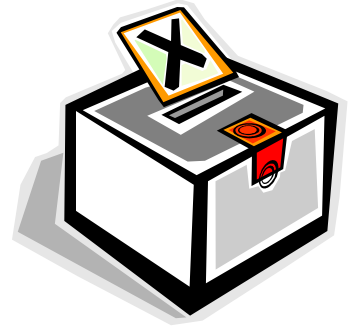
way, the endorsement, approval, or support of PTA. Discretion must be used by the current PTA president, because he/she is the official spokesperson for the PTA organization.

A current PTA officer/board member may not use his/her title or the name of the PTA to endorse a ballot measure on which PTA has not taken a position or candidate even for purposes of identification in any print, electronic, or website candidate literature (e.g., campaign mailer, ballot measure, candidate stationery).

A current or former PTA officer/board member must not use his/her title, the name of the PTA or the trade mark of PTA in any election venue unless authorized by a vote of the association, following a study of the issue.

A current PTA officer/board member must not use his/her title, the name of the PTA or the trademark of the PTA to take action in opposition to the official California State PTA position.

Members who choose to seek public office may neither request nor receive PTA endorsement at any time, but may list their PTA service as part of their qualifications.



PROTECT OUR PTA NON-PARTISAN POLICY AND TAX-EXEMPT STATUS

To retain our tax-exempt status and continue to receive tax-deductible contributions, PTAs may not: 1) devote more than an insubstantial part of their activities to influence legislation, including ballot measures (generally interpreted as not exceeding five percent of total income); 2) participate in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for national, state, or local public office.

An association's failure to comply with these restrictions may endanger district, council, California State and National PTA IRC 501(c) (3) status.

www.capta.org - What's New!

Since 1897 PTA has promoted advocacy by the parent in the school and community and with policy makers. Your California State PTA website now features a new page under the Advocacy tab entitled **Federal Legislation/NCLB**. National PTA and California State PTA positions will be featured on this page in addition to links to federal agencies and PTA partners and their resources. Currently the page features information on the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind.

Use this page to jump to National PTA's advocacy pages, contact your legislator, sign up for National PTA's This Week in Washington and download resource tools to begin your local unit's advocacy efforts.

Links to the House and Senate websites permit easy access to bills, debate and hearing calendars, legislation and the Library of Congress' Thomas research website.

PTA: every member. an advocate.

A note from the Treasurer



Help protect your PTA/PTSA, its volunteers, members and the community by remembering a couple of key things about every activity that you are involved in to help kids.

The California State PTA provides us all with insurance protection and each unit should have a copy of the latest insurance handbook. It is important that your committee chairs are aware of activities that are “Green Light” activities {go and do them}, “Yellow Light” activities {call our insurance broker for help} and “Red Light” Activities {as a PTA we can not do, hold or be involved with “Red Light” activities}.

In order for your unit to be protected you need to ensure that each activity (including membership and Executive Board meetings) is recorded in the minutes of your unit and/or council. The motion might be: *“I move for the PTA to hold a reading fair on October 8th, from 5 pm to 9 pm in the multi-purpose room”*. This puts it into the official record and if a claim is filed, the Insurance Company’s first request is going to be for the minutes of the unit.

The protection is pretty easy to get, we all have to remember to do it and make sure that it is recorded in the minutes. Have a great year.

Establishing or Changing a Bank Account

Recently, 32nd District visited the bank to change the signature cards on our account. In order to successfully complete the transaction we needed:

- All signers on the account, both incoming and outgoing. Each new person added to the account needed 2 forms of identification, including picture ID. A PTA membership card was not considered valid identification.
- Bylaws. The bank wanted verification that 32nd District PTA was a 501(c)(3), and the Tax ID or EIN. In addition, the bank needed clarification that 32nd District PTA is organized under the authority of the California State PTA.
- Minutes that listed the names of the incoming officers, and their titles. The minutes have to be signed by the secretary. A computer signature is not considered valid.
- Time and patience.

Sue Woodworth-Bennett
President, 32nd District PTA



Flu Season and Schools

Flu will be an unwelcome visitor to many homes and communities this winter. Schools can help educate students, their families, and school staff about how to reduce the chance of getting the flu as well as reduce the likelihood of spreading flu to others. Additional information from the experts is available from the links below.

FIVE FAST FLU FACTS

From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm

- Flu symptoms include fever, headache, chills, body aches, tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, and nasal congestion.
- Flu is spread when a person who has the flu coughs, sneezes, or speaks and sends the flu virus into the air. The virus enters the nose, throat or lungs of a person and multiplies. Flu spreads less frequently when a person touches a surface that has flu viruses on it.
- If you get the flu: rest, drink plenty of liquids, and avoid alcohol and tobacco.
- Antibiotics like penicillin will not cure the flu. The best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot. Over-the-counter medications may relieve symptoms of flu. The National Institute for Allergies & Infectious Diseases recommends acetaminophen (Tylenol) for children; aspirin or acetaminophen for adults. Decongestants, cough suppressants, and use of a humidifier can provide symptomatic relief.

In addition to flu shots, three antiviral medicines are available by prescription that will help prevent flu infection: Tamiflu, Flumadine and Symmetrel.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN:

- Do NOT give aspirin to a child or teenager who has the flu. To learn why, visit <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/factsheets/flu.htm>
- Most antihistamines cause sleepiness. If a child still has a stuffy nose when they return to school, parents may want to ask their child's doctor to prescribe a non-sedating antihistamine.
- Encourage children to cover coughs and sneezes, wash hands frequently, and keep hands away from eyes, nose and mouth.
- A sick child is advised to stay at home during the first days of illness when symptoms are most severe and the infection is most contagious. Children can return to school when symptoms are improving and no fever has been detected for 24 hours.

adapted from an article on www.capta.org

Save the Date Notices



The 109th California State PTA Convention Long Beach CA May 1-4, 2008.

The California State PTA Convention is a unique opportunity for training on every facet of running or participating in the PTA, as well as, a forum for each unit to share ideas and experiences with other units locally and from other parts of the state. Please do not forget to budget for this important event. This is a legitimate PTA expense and it is our goal that each unit will send a representative.

If you have any convention related questions, please email me at 32ndconvention@comcast.net.

Mitzi Reagan, 32nd District Convention Chair

Reflections Program

**The deadline for entries to be submitted to the
32nd District is December 1, 2007**

The National Reflections Program was established in 1969 and the program's longevity and participation figures attest to its strength. The excitement and enthusiasm that the program generates for children, parents, schools and communities is unmatched. I am looking forward to seeing the wonderful ways students will be expressing their creativity .

**The 32nd District Showcase will be held
on Saturday February 2, 2008
at 2:00pm
at Alhambra High School in Martinez**

By now Units should have their Reflections Programs up and running and Councils should have their dates set for submission of unit entries to them. If you have any questions or concerns I can be reached at (925) 685-3483 or at wandawalt@astound.net

Wanda Waltman, Reflections Chairman

*32nd District's
Founders Day Dinner
will be on
February 28, 2008
(note new date)
at
Zio Fraedo's
Ristorante
in Pleasant Hill*

MEMBERSHIP IS YEAR ROUND



As a new year starts perhaps some resolutions regarding PTA membership would yield some rewards! Ask yourselves... Did we stop looking for members once the classroom parties were awarded? Did we take it for granted that everyone saw the "Join our PTA/PTSA" letter that was sent out in September? Did we talk about the "end" of our membership campaign? Have we stopped asking people to join? Did we stop remitting per capita on a regular basis once we submitted sufficient per capita to qualify for Early Bird and Chairman's Club Awards?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above, it's time for a renewed push and commitment to increasing, your PTA's membership. At your school site, now is the time for another flyer, another incentive, another objective to be set and expressed. Did you reach your goal for the year? If not, let people know! If you did, congratulations. But, you can still ask people to join. Use every opportunity, always ask at every school or PTA event, have a PTA table with flyers, advertise so that attendees can join PTA and at the very least have someone at every event prepared with envelopes and membership cards who is willing to accept membership dues. Don't wait until the end of an event to ask people to join. Make it part of the introduction; the event itself is probably result of the work that PTA has done!

Although membership is year round and anyone can join at any time, we do need to have a cut off to use for determining yearly membership totals. The date for cut off will be March 15, 2008. Plan now to make sure that you have submitted the per capita for all your members. Membership is what makes PTA the recognized voice and leader in proving advocacy efforts for all children.

Chris Low ,
ship/VP

Member-
32nd District PTA

Benefits of PTA Membership in California!

Learn how to protect yourself and your children from online dangers! Thanks to the generosity of the Entertainment Software Association Foundation and Web Wise Kids, **Wired With Wisdom** is being offered to members of the California PTA at NO COST.

This user-friendly, interactive program for parents features five fun learning components, addressing a wide variety of issues, each of which can be completed in only 20 minutes.

Download your copy of **Wired With Wisdom** at no cost: Log on to <http://www.webwisekids.org/CALPTA/> The password is WISDOM

What can I do at home to help my child succeed in school?

Provided by Rachel Hurd, VP-Parent & Community Involvement

Create a home environment that encourages learning and schoolwork. Establish a daily family routine of mealtimes with time for homework, chores and bedtime as well as time for family activities.

Show your child that the skills he is learning in school are an important part of the things he will do as an adult. Let him see you reading books, newspapers and computer screens; writing reports, letters, e-mails and lists; using math to figure change or to measure for new carpeting; and doing things that require thought and effort.



Make sure that your home has lots of reading materials that are appropriate for your child. Keep books, magazines and newspapers in the house. You can find many good books and magazines for your child at yard or library sales. Books make good gifts.

Encourage your child to use the library. Ask the librarian to tell your child about special programs that she might participate in, such as summer reading programs and book clubs and about services such as homework help.

Limit TV viewing to no more than one hour on a school night. Be aware of the shows your child likes to watch and discuss his choices with him. The same goes for video games.

Help your child learn to use the Internet properly and effectively.

Encourage your child to be responsible and to work independently. Taking responsibility and working independently are important qualities for school success.

Show an interest in what your child does in school. Support her special interests by attending school plays, musical events, science fairs or sporting events.

Offer praise and encouragement for achievement and improvement.

How can I get the most out of parent-teacher conferences?

Provided by Rachel Hurd, VP-Parent & Community Involvement



Set up a conference early in the school year. Let the teacher know that you are interested in your child's education and that you want to be kept informed of his progress.

- If possible, also arrange to observe the teaching in your child's classroom. Afterward, talk with the teacher about what you saw and how it fits with your hopes for your child and your child's needs.
- Before a conference, write out questions you want to ask and jot down what you want to tell the teacher. Be prepared to take notes during the conference and ask for an explanation if you don't understand something.
- Talk with the teacher about your child's talents, hobbies, study habits and any special sensitivities he might have, such as concerns about weight or speech difficulties.
- Tell the teacher if you think your child needs special help and about any special family situation or event that might affect your child's ability to learn. Mention such things as a new baby, an illness or a recent or an upcoming move.
- Tell the teacher what kind of person you want your child to become and what values are important to you.
- Ask the teacher for specific details about your child's work and progress. If your child has already received some grades, ask how your child is being evaluated. Ask about specific things that you can do to help your child. At home, think about what the teacher has said and then follow up. If the teacher has told you that your child needs to improve in certain areas, check back in a few weeks to see how things are.
- Approach the teacher with a cooperative spirit. If you disagree with the teacher about an issue, don't argue in front of your child. Set up a meeting to talk only about that issue. Before that meeting, plan what you are going to say. Try to be positive and remain calm. Listen carefully. If the teacher's explanation doesn't satisfy you, and you do not think you can make progress by further discussion with the teacher, arrange to talk with the principal or even the school superintendent.

Taken from a California State PTA Parent Involvement Commission article in *The Communicator*, October 2006

32nd District PTA Calendar 2007-2008

November 26	9:45 AM - Noon	CCCOE	District Board Meeting
December 1	-	-	Reflections Entry Deadline to District
December 17	9:45 AM - Noon	CCCOE	District Board Meeting (if needed)
January 14	9:45 AM - Noon	CCCOE	District Board Meeting
February 2	2:00pm	Alhambra High	Reflections Showcase
February 11	9:45 AM - Noon	CCCOE	District Board Meeting
February 28	TBA	Zio Fraedo's	Founder's Day Dinner
March 17	9:45 AM - Noon	CCCOE	District Board Meeting
March 31	7:00-9:00pm	CCCOE	General Meeting
April 21	9:45 AM - Noon	CCCOE	District Board Meeting
May 1-4	-	Long Beach	CA State PTA Convention
May 19	9:45 AM - Noon	CCCOE	District Board Meeting
June 16	9:45 AM - Noon	CCCOE	District Board Meeting



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We're on the Web!
www.32ndpta.org

32nd District PTA

every child. one voice.
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