



How your PTA can support a local school facilities bond or parcel tax

PTAs may want to help secure the passage of a local school district facilities bond or local parcel tax election. Unit, council and district PTAs may participate in these efforts when the board and/or membership has studied the issue and voted to support such a campaign. The PTA may draft and approve a resolution in support of a specific ballot measure so that its support for the measure is clear to the community.

AUTHORITY: The California State PTA supports providing adequate school facilities for public schools; points within these three resolutions are relevant (see <http://capta.org/focus-areas/advocacy/resolutions/> for full text):

School Facilities Crisis (1986) – PTA believes children and youth should be guaranteed a safe learning environment conducive to achieving excellence and realizing each individual’s maximum potential. California’s changing demographics have caused the problem of seriously over-crowded, and in some areas, non-existent school facilities.

School Facilities Crisis (1990) – CAPTA resolved to alert the public to the severe school facilities crisis in California’s public schools; seek and support legislation to increase the funds available for school construction, provide adequate funding for renovation and rehabilitation of old facilities, and increase funding for ongoing maintenance of all facilities; seek and support legislation to streamline the application process school districts must follow to secure approval from the State Application Board for school facility construction; support legislation that does not fiscally penalize school districts that have passed a school bond for construction or rehabilitation of school facilities, or seize empty school sites for this purpose.

School Facilities and Public Planning (1991) – CAPTA supports legislation requiring public schools to be specified as a mandated element of the general plan currently required of every county and municipality in California, and urges its units, councils and districts to seek enactment of ordinances in their communities that would require the inclusion of adequate school facilities in all general plans.

This position statement also supports the adequacy of facilities:

Safe School Environments (2011) – CAPTA believes that every child is entitled to a safe and peaceful school environment that is orderly and empowering...[One of] the four essential components that comprise a safe and peaceful school environment [is] the physical setting and conditions in which education takes place... PTA believes that school personnel, students, parents, and community members must work together to develop and implement a safe and peaceful school environment on all school campuses throughout California.

Additionally, Fourth District PTA’s Legislative Agenda for 2015-16 seeks to secure adequate funding for education, including advocating for sufficient funding to repair, modernize, and construct needed school facilities.

PTAs can be most effective by:

- Participating on the school district committee to recommend to the board of education the feasibility of placing a facilities bond or parcel tax on the local ballot, and what provisions the measure should include.
- Taking an active role in planning and running the campaign.
- Providing speakers to inform the community.
- Developing and/or distributing available campaign material – but not by using student help, unless permitted by the school district ([California State PTA Legislation Policies and Procedure No. 11](#)).
- Making use of radio, TV, and print media, including newsletters, editorial board visits, letters to the editor, and other communication resources such as PTA email and Web pages.

How to Make a Study



A study is in order when the association (membership) is concerned about a subject or issue. A study committee gathers facts, investigates carefully and prepares a final report. The purposes of a study may be to acquire knowledge about a subject; respond to a need or problem; gather available facts before acting on an issue; develop information on a subject or issue that the association believes should be presented to the California State PTA, government agencies (e.g., school board, city council, board of supervisors), other groups or the public; or develop a resolution for the California State PTA Convention.

Your PTA can initiate a study with a motion from the association membership; at the request from an individual member; by a recommendation from the executive board or a committee; or at the request from an allied agency, organization or group.

The president appoints the chairman and 4-8 committee members (ratified by the executive board). The number and composition may be specified in the motion creating the committee. (If this is done, the phrase “and others as appointed by the president” must always be included as protection against oversight.) Committee expenses are legitimate PTA expenses.

The Study Committee should keep minutes; identify the issue(s) to be addressed and set goals; establish the scope of the study; assign responsibilities; and utilize reliable resources for accurate research. All possible solutions, conclusions, etc., should be listed with an evaluation of how they will affect the subject or issue. Recommended solutions should adhere to the Purposes and basic policies of the PTA, accomplish the desired results, be practical, avoid creating new problems, be in the best interest of children and youth, and address whether the solutions completely address the subject or issue as defined in the scope or require more research.

The study report is approved by the committee, then submitted first to the PTA executive board and then to the association. List all reference materials and other resources used; any recommendations for further study, implementation or action; and the time requirements involved in implementing recommendations. The PTA may refer a study report to another group, although that group had no part in initiating the original study. When appropriate, studies should be submitted to the council (if in council) and to the district PTA, so the information will be available to other units. Following the final report, the study committee ceases to function unless given further responsibilities by the PTA.



Election issues

PTA's role in elections may include...

- Voter registration drives
- Candidate forums/questionnaires
- Ballot measure support/opposition
- Voter information

PTAs cannot...

- Support or oppose **candidates** for any office
- Endorse or help any **political party**
- Distribute campaign materials or allow buttons/paraphernalia at a PTA event
- Invite a candidate to address PTA unless ALL candidates are invited

PTA leaders: Current or former PTA board members may not use the name of their PTA or their PTA title to endorse or oppose a candidate. Judgment should be exercised by PTA leaders on whether privately endorsing a candidate (without using a PTA title) could negatively affect a future relationship should a different candidate win. PTA members are not prohibited from running for public office themselves nor from listing PTA involvement as part of their biographical information and/or campaign literature.

Differing positions: If a higher level PTA takes a position on an issue, local PTAs do not need to conduct a study to support the PTA position. If a local PTA disagrees with the position taken by a higher level PTA, they don't have to advocate in support of PTA's position, but should NOT advocate against it.