



CALL TO ACTION FOR PTA LEADERS

PTA has never been more important! During the next several months the governor and legislature are considering drastic budget cuts to programs and services for our children’s health, education and well-being. We must motivate all members and others in our communities to speak with one voice for every child in the state in opposition to these proposed cuts.

To support this work, California State PTA will help:

I. EDUCATE PTA MEMBERSHIP

With the help of district, council and unit leaders, we will spread the word to all members about the threats to healthcare, education and other children’s services posed by this budget. Information will be communicated through email, phone blasts, hard copy mailings, and through the California State PTA website at www.capta.org. A wide range of resources will also be available on the website, such as fact sheets, sample letters-to-the-editor, tips for planning local activities – as well as resources in languages other than English. State, district and council leaders will be available to make presentations and to provide guidance and assistance to local members. A major activity will also be held at the Annual State Convention in Long Beach.

II. ACTIVATE PTA MEMBERSHIP

Every single member of PTA will be encouraged to take three vital actions:

- **Respond** to email and phone alerts by contacting their legislators.
- **Meet** with legislators in their local district offices.
- **Participate** in at least one “Flunk-the-Budget Fridays” community activities.

III. SUPPORT FOR PTA LEADERSHIP

Every PTA district, council and unit leader will be provided resources to help motivate their members to take these three vital actions. In addition, PTA leaders will be encouraged to:

- **Alert** parents to the threats posed by the governor's proposed budget cuts to education and children's services. Forward information and calls to action to all of your members.
- **Adopt** a resolution at your local meeting. *Remember to notify your local media when you adopt. Also notify the California State PTA office at legislation@capta.org.*
- **Use** local news media outlets to educate your larger community via letters-to-the-editor, a news conference and editorial board visits. *Use the Flunk the Budget fact sheet for key points to draft letter-to-the-editor from you or your PTA unit, council or district president.*

If you are able to participate in a local news conference or editorial board visit with your local newspaper, please contact Carol Kocivar, Vice-President for Communications at communications@capta.org or Lindsay Shoemaker, Communications Specialist at lshoemaker@capta.org. They will work with you to help make it happen!



LOCAL STRATEGIES FOR PTA DISTRICT AND COUNCIL LEADERS

District, council and unit leaders play an essential role in educating our membership. We must “target” our grassroots advocacy efforts so that we find a way to reach each individual legislator – that means taking a uniquely local approach to crafting and delivering messages that will have the greatest impact on those legislators.

LOCAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Often, the most active PTA councils and units are in legislative districts where legislators have traditionally supported our cause – that is, they have opposed cuts to education and children’s programs and opposed suspending Proposition 98.

There is a very important role for PTA groups in these communities to play now because we cannot take any past support for granted.

At the same time, many legislators need to hear directly and loudly from parents because, otherwise, these legislators are likely to cater to a narrow but vocal constituency that advocates for cuts alone as the way to solve the state’s budget crisis. PTA believes a budget proposal that looks at only cuts is not a real solution because it does not address California’s underlying inadequate and unstable revenue sources.

We must make every effort to support PTA leaders in these areas so they can raise awareness about the harm the proposed cuts will have on local children and families. We must make sure all legislators pay attention to and care about the damage the proposed budget cuts will have on schools, healthcare and other children’s services in their districts.

Our primary goal is to make sure legislators care about and listen to a constituency that is the bedrock of their districts – children, parents and families – but that does not have a strong voice unless and until we help develop it! This is the untapped potential unique to PTA.

I. LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS WHERE WE NEED TO “TURN UP THE HEAT.”

There’s an old saying that legislators don’t always see the light until they feel the heat. In that spirit, we want to make sure elected representatives, especially those from key legislative districts, feel the heat of PTA’s advocacy against the proposed budget cuts.

We will use PTA resources (i.e., leaders on the legislative team and district leaders) to personally reach out to local PTA leaders in these areas and work with them to develop a local strategy aimed at assembly members and/or senators.

Support will be provided to:

- 1. Train local PTA leaders on the issue;**
- 2. Help them put together an in-person meeting** in the legislative district with several of their PTA peers (and possibly accompany them at this meeting, if they wish);
- 3. Help draft letters-to-the-editor and Op/ Eds** for them to get signed and placed into local newspapers directly aimed at their legislator(s);
- 4. Work with them to organize “Flunk-the-Budget Fridays” activities**, such as a local press event in front of their legislator’s office or other location – again, directly calling on their local legislator to oppose a budget that harms children:
 - a. Identify speakers (could include other children’s advocacy groups or children’s service provider representatives);*
 - b. Write talking points;*
 - c. Write a press advisory and send out to local news media;*
 - d. Follow up calls to news media outlets to push the story;*
 - e. Staff press event.*
- 5. Potentially do local phone blasts from local PTA leaders to people in that legislative district** asking them to call that legislator’s office to register their opposition to harmful budget cuts.

III. LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS WHERE WE NEED TO REMAIN ACTIVE

Where PTA leadership is already strong, PTAs should be encouraged to continue visiting their legislators. Their message should be the same, but should have a different tone – one that urges the legislator to continue showing leadership by making sure these harmful cuts proposed by the governor are not allowed to happen. Letters-to-the-editor, Op/Eds and press conferences aimed at “the budget proposal” could describe the specific cuts and the local impact in these legislative districts. Legislators who have publicly vowed to oppose cuts and protect Proposition 98 should be acknowledged and thanked.