

Sixth District PTA

Santa Clara County, California
"PTA – Building Community Unity"



From the President's Desk

California must serve all children better than we have. It's time for our state's leaders to put our children first. It's time for action. Let's make our state elected officials accountable for their actions or lack thereof. As President of Sixth District PTA, I have the honor of representing nearly 50,000 PTA members in Santa Clara County. California State PTA has almost 1 million members throughout the state. The core of our membership is made up of parents and family members who care deeply and personally about the well-being of the children in their lives. Our members understand that providing the best for our children means that parents are called on now to guide our state in this time of crisis.

Parents are stepping up as never before to help out our local schools by volunteering in classrooms, serving on committees, engaging in more fundraising, and joining PTAs in rising numbers. But they can't make up for ongoing budget cuts. We know that involved parents provide the surest route to success in school and life.

But children need other caring adults in their lives as well. In California, our children are losing those adults from our schools: *our state now ranks at the very bottom of all 50 states in staff-to-student ratios, from teachers to administrators and counselors*. We also are nearly last among the states in per-pupil spending. And that undermines all our talk about rising expectations, widening opportunity and closing the achievement gap. Arts instruction, class-size reduction and other programs that are crucial to these goals are being wiped out. *LA Youth*, a newspaper by and about teens, published this observation from a student: "My school doesn't have the money to let teachers make enough copies to give one handout to each student." And a 16-year-old student at South High School in Torrance said, "We're losing a lot of learning time because we're being forced to spend time copying down handouts."

This is a story parents are hearing from their children every day. We need to make sure that our leaders and all Californians hear them as well. As parents, grandparents and PTA members, we are ready to help our state to **find the leadership and courage to secure ongoing stable resources** to fund our schools, and to honor our promises to all of California's children.

Thank you.

Richard

Richard J. Velasquez, President