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Special Message from the Ninth District PTA President:

As we enter this Thanksgiving Season, I want to express my personal gratitude for all of you. I am thankful for all the families who join their PTA, attend PTA meetings, and volunteer at your school/PTA events. I am thankful for each person who reads our newsletter, attends our trainings and events, and supports PTA in whatever way they can. We could not do this without you. Your time and energy are valuable and I appreciate you using it to help PTA on our mission of positively impacting the lives of all children and families.

I would like to give special acknowledgement to La Mesa Arts Academy PTSA in Mt. Helix Council of PTAs who will be celebrating 104 years of being a PTA this month. Thank you to all those who have contributed to the support of La Mesa Arts PTSA throughout its lifetime.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

-- by Anne Emfinger (President)
president@ninthdistrictpta.org

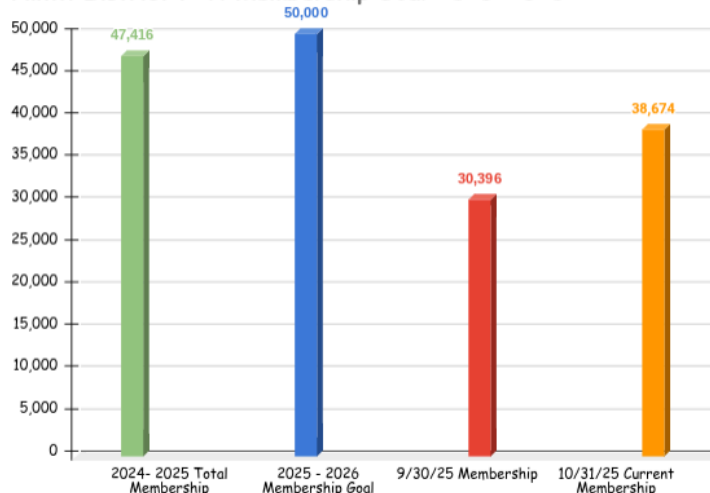




**Ninth District PTA
2025-2026
Membership Goal**

During 2024-2025 we had a total of 47,416 (green) PTA members. Our goal for 2025-2026 is 50,000 (blue) PTA Members. On September 30, 2025 we had 30,396 (red) PTA Members. As of October 31, 2025 we have 38,674 (orange) PTA Members. Keep up the great teamwork, and your membership drive!

Ninth District PTA Membership Goal 2025-2026



Taxes — Are They Done?

For units with a fiscal year ending June 30th, your federal, state, and RRF-1 filings with the CT-TR-1 or 990 attachment should be submitted by November 15th. Even though PTA is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization, timely filing is still required. Check your bylaws for your fiscal year. Filings are due 4 ½ months after the end of your fiscal year.

It was a pleasure working with all the units that reached out for help this season! If you haven't filed yet, please contact your council treasurer or me right away so we can help you get everything submitted as soon as possible.

-- Deborah Childers (Treasurer)
treasurer@ninthdistrictpta.org



Insurance Renewal with AIM

On **October 7th**, unit presidents should have received an email from **AIM (Association Insurance Management, Inc.)** with a link to the renewal portal. To access your account:

1. Click **"Forgot Password"** to set a new password.
1. Complete and submit the **renewal form**.
1. Once submitted, AIM will send an **invoice** to the president.

To pay online, you'll need your **bank routing and account number**. Remember to complete the **ACH Payment Authorization Form** to meet the **two-signature requirement** and attach the invoice for documentation.

Don't delay—complete your renewal before the holiday rush!

A great update this year: within about **48 hours** of submitting your renewal and payment, AIM will email your **Certificate of Insurance** directly to your unit.

Please note that our standard insurance policy covers **fraud or embezzlement up to \$25,000**. If your unit's **bank balance or income exceeds \$25,000**, discuss with **AIM** and your **executive board** whether increasing your coverage would be wise. Thank you to all the units that have already completed their renewal!

-- Deborah Childers (Treasurer)
treasurer@ninthdistrictpta.org

Cash Handling Reminder

Did you know that **cash withdrawals are never permitted** from a PTA account? This violates the **two-signature rule**.

If you need **start-up cash** for an event:

- Write a **check** to the person setting up the cash box, noting “start-up cash for cash box” in the memo line.
- After the event, complete **two cash verification forms**—one for the start-up cash and one for event income.
- **Redeploy the start-up cash separately** to show it was returned to the account.

It may seem like extra steps, but these procedures protect **you, your board, and your PTA's funds**.

-- Deborah Childers (Treasurer)
treasurer@ninthdistrictpta.org



Nominating Committee Election!! Already??

It may seem we just got this PTA/PTSA year up and running, but to keep the PTA momentum going, this is the time to start thinking about the next board and their nomination and election. Our bylaws provide for the election of the nominating committee to be at least 60 days prior to the annual election (Article V, Section 4b). Most PTAs/PTSAs conduct the annual election in March or April. This means the election of the nominating committee must be an agenda item for the January or February association meeting.

When the bylaws provide that an action **shall** occur, that action is not optional. Every PTA/PTSA shall elect a nominating committee within the timeline required.

Questions?? Contact parliamentarian@ninthdistrictpta.org OR contact your council parliamentarian, if in council.

Sue King
 Parliamentarian
 Ninth District PTA

How to Attract New PTA Leaders

As previously mentioned, we are almost ready to elect nominating committees. But what are some ways to find future officers? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Personally invite a new person to attend your upcoming association meeting. If they are not already a PTA member, please ask the president in advance about offering them a courtesy seat. Follow up to answer any questions and then ask them join.
2. Ask a new person to serve on a committee. The committee to approve minutes after the final association meeting of the year is an easy one! Ask current committees to add one new person (with the president's approval.) Another great committee is the nominating committee. They must be elected, but it's a short-term job, and there's a chance the person will say "hey, I could fill that role!"
3. Be sure to ask potential committee members to help with a task they already enjoy. For some it could be career day, art lessons, social media, hospitality or even tax filings. Everyone has a skill to offer, so make participation easy!
4. Include students in your committees when possible. It's great to get student ideas when planning events. And if there is interest, a student may serve as a board member as a student representative or other officer.
5. Expand your volunteer pool by purposeful inclusion. What families on campus are not represented in your board or committees? Ask your family or community liaison for help in reaching these parents.
6. And this is most important- make sure your PTA is having fun! No one wants to help a group of people who are known for drama or fight amongst themselves. You never know who is taking notice!

You can reach Denae Senise, VP Leadership Services, at leadership@ninthdistrictpta.org.

PTA's Organizational Structure

The California State PTA is built on teamwork and connection! Each level — from districts to councils to local units — plays an important part in supporting families, schools, and communities. When we understand how our PTA structure works, it becomes easier to find help, share ideas, and work together to make a difference for every child.

District PTAs are geographical divisions of California State PTA, established to carry out its programs. District PTAs are responsible for training and support for their units and councils.

Councils of PTAs are created by California State PTA for the purpose of collaboration, leadership training, and coordination of efforts of the member units. Councils are usually created around one or more school districts.

Unit PTAs are organized and chartered in conformity with rules and regulations as prescribed in the bylaws of California State PTA and the laws of the State of California. These units are self-governing bodies for the purpose of planning programs and activities to meet local community needs. However, they are required to observe the policies and procedures of California State PTA, National PTA, the IRS, and state government.

All leaders in units in a council need to know the council's name and council leadership. As noted above, the council is the first contact for assistance. If there is any question on who to contact, be in touch with our Ninth District PTA office and you will be directed to your council.

In some cases, units are not assigned to a council and are referred to as "out of council." Leaders in units out of council should contact the Ninth District PTA leadership for assistance.

We're all part of one big PTA family, working side by side to support our schools and communities. Knowing where to turn for guidance — whether it's your council, district, or the Ninth District PTA office — helps every leader feel supported and confident. Together, we can keep building strong partnerships that help all children thrive!

Ninth District PTA
office@ninthdistrictpta.org
 858-268-8077

Reflections

As we get closer to our Ninth District PTA Reflections Deadline, our committee would like to check in and confirm what units and councils are participating so we can make it easier for checking in the art and to stay organized. Please fill this out if your unit or council will be participating in this year's Reflections Art program.

<https://forms.gle/7anAwgixipw7uiX8>

Some important reminders:

- Your PTA must be in good standing. (PTAs in good standing have minimum 15 paid members, bylaws reviewed within the last 5 years and all government filings up-to-date.) If your units bylaws are older than 2020 your students art may be disqualified at the state level. Part of why we are asking you to fill out the google form above is to be able to check and ensure your unit/council is up to date and we have time to help you if you need it. Please contact us well in advance of the due date if you are unsure if your unit or council is missing anything. If you are a council president or reflections chair, please be sure to check in with your units who are participating so that you can check their status to make sure they are compliant before sending them to us at Ninth District PTA.
- Please make sure all of the art pieces have an artist statement. The artist statement is 40% of the score.
- Deadline for Councils and Out of Council Units is Tuesday, December 2nd. All entries must be submitted to Ninth District PTA via the digital form, but we are asking for the physical art and photography as well. We will be accepting the physical visual art and photography pieces that day between 9am-2pm at the Ninth District PTA office located at the San Diego Office of Education 6401 Linda Vista Road, Annex A San Diego, CA 92111.
- If your council completes their judging before December 2nd and can send us your digital form from the art pieces that are advancing please email that to reflections@ninthdistrictpta.com.
- MAKE SURE YOUR FILES ARE SET TO ANYONE CAN VIEW. This is important so that our judges can easily access the art submissions to score them.
- Art sent in past our deadline will not be accepted.
- If you are having trouble or need help with anything please contact us right away and one of our committee members will help you.

-- by Jemima Dutra (Reflections Chairperson)
reflections@ninthdistrictpta.org



Do you realize you are using AI whenever you "Google" something? Most of the search engines are now offering a helpful "summary" at the top of the search results. My husband used ChatGBT to help plan a road trip with his brother this summer - it listed cities to visit and sites around the theme of "jazz music". Like almost any tool, it can be used for a variety of tasks, the key is to know how to use it properly.

In the past two weeks, several questions have come to us about some aspect of running a PTA, and there is a paragraph referenced that supports the question. The problem is that the "supporting" paragraph has been gathered from information all over the internet, which means all over the country and world. PTA is a national organization with State PTAs that might have slightly different rules and regulations, depending on their own government agencies. Your children are probably learning how to use these types of results in school. These AI "summaries" usually show a link icon at the end of the statement with links to the pages that were used. Click on these, hover over them, make sure they are from California PTAs. I tried to ask a question about bingo and I received a link to a website based in England!

Better yet, use the original "AI" - visit the Ninth District PTA website, or the California State PTA websites (main, leaders AND Toolkit) and search within those sites to be sure you have the best information about how to run a PTA. And if you are still unsure - contact us!

-- by Shawn Straw (Executive Vice President)
evp@ninthdistrictpta.org

GoFundMe Websites Set Up for Non-profits

GoFundMe created free websites for 1.4 million 501c3 non-profit organizations (including PTAs) without asking or telling them about it. Since many non-profits were upset that these GoFundMe websites would distract donors from the non-profits' own websites, GoFundMe has just changed their policy to "opt-in", and if a website is not claimed, it will be removed:

<https://pro.gofundme.com/c/blog/nonprofit-pages-announcement-2025/>

If your PTA chooses to use the GoFundMe website that was set up for it, be aware that when donors pay via the GoFundMe sites, the default voluntary "tip" is set at 14-16% of the donation, on top of their processing fees of 2.2% plus \$0.30 per transaction. The donor has a choice to reset the tip, if they notice it.

If you have questions or want more information, please contact Shawn Straw (Executive Vice President) at evp@ninthdistrictpta.org.

November Spotlight: Vista Grande PTA

In El Cajon, California, the Vista Grande Elementary PTA is proving it can be the beating heart of a "school family." Through tireless effort, creative energy, and an extraordinary partnership with its school, this PTA is crafting a joyful, supportive, and vibrant community.

The energy on campus is palpable. This school year alone, the PTA has hosted a family movie night and completed a membership drive, signing up an impressive **344 members**. Their recent space-themed Fun Run was a massive success, raising an astonishing **\$58,800**. After surpassing their \$50,000 goal, students and staff were treated to the sight of their beloved principals getting "cosmic color blasted."

The fun doesn't stop. The PTA is also hosting a book fair, where every teacher will receive a pile of free books for their classroom, followed by a Fall Festival featuring a spectacular bubble foam glow party. Throughout the year, they host a Holiday Shop, a "Soup-r-bow" food drive for Feeding San Diego, a Multicultural Fair, a Family Luau, Moms & Muffins, and a Father/Daughter dance.

Beyond events, the PTA provides fundamental support, paying for all field trip buses, funding teacher communication tools, and providing online learning programs.

What makes Vista Grande PTA truly unique? According to President Megan Hughes, it's the "parent, student, teacher, and principal involvement... It feels like everyone wants to be here and help. Our volunteer turnout is excellent. It feels like a school family."

School administration echoes this sentiment. "As a staff, we are incredibly impressed by our PTA Board," said Principal Tita Cordero-Bautista. "Their partnership truly strengthens the connection between home and school... We are continually impressed by their creativity, organization, and dedication."

This creativity shines in their membership drives, like a race car theme where the top five classes won ice cream parties.

For President Megan Hughes, the motivation is personal: "I remember my elementary school experience as being so joyful. I want that for our families... School should be a place where we feel safe, respected and come together as a community where all are valued."

The Vista Grande PTA consist of the following positions and members: President - Megan Hughes, Executive VP - Cierra Adame, Secretary - Sandra Hollenbeck, Treasurer - Lindsay Acuna, Financial Secretary - Apryl McLaughlin, Parliamentarian - Desiree Dinsdale, Financial Reviewer - Tamara Rose, Hospitality Chair - Teresa Taravella, Membership Chair - Cathleen Ottinger, Historian - Jeanne Kaufman, and Room Parent Coordinator - Lauren Alvarez.



If you know of a PTA/PTSA that should be spotlighted in our December Newsletter please fill out this [Google Form](#) and submit it by midnight of November 12, 2025.

-- by Sonya Vargas (Vice President, Communications Director)
communications@ninthdistrictpta.org

Membership

Kudos to all of our units for working hard on their membership campaigns this year!

We would like to celebrate Tierra Del Sol Council PTA for their outstanding work with their units membership. Every unit under the Tierra Del Sol Council PTA in Santee has reached over 100 members! We took a moment to connect with them to share some ideas for how their units were able to achieve this milestone.

When they found out that they were the only council to have all their units reach over 100 members, they were "absolutely thrilled". Their council represents 9 units that work tirelessly to engage in their school's communities. Tierra Del Sol Council PTA President said, "Seeing every unit reach 100+ members was such an exciting milestone—it really shows the strength, teamwork, and dedication across all our schools!"

The units in Tierra Del Sol Council PTA promote their memberships in different ways. Here are few ways they help to promote their PTA membership each year:

- Class Competitions
- Visiting TK/K Orientations
- Opportunity drawings during the first month
- Utilizing TOTEM to send reminders to renew their membership
- Message boards on campus
- Social media postings to promote membership
- Membership tables at drop off and pick up
- Sharing what it means to join PTA and highlighting what PTA does on campus

A few incentives that the units give are:

- Discounted or free entry to PTA events for PTA members
- An extra bingo card on Bingo Night
- A swag bag for joining the PTA

Tierra Del Sol Council PTA is focused on building a strong community and resources for all their units. This year they are focused on creating goals alongside their units.

Thank you to Tierra Del Sol Council PTA board Candace Schmitthener (President), Char Jervis (EVP), Danielle Frahn (Treasurer), and Nicole Shaw (Secretary) for sharing ideas with us that will inspire your councils and units membership drives.

As a reminder all manual memberships (any dues collected not via TOTEM) must be remitted up the channels. Please be sure to send those in so that all your memberships can be counted!

Questions or need help? Please contact Jemima Dutra, Ninth District PTA Membership Director at membership@ninthdistrictpta.org.

Diabetes Awareness Month

November is Diabetes Awareness Month! On November 14, 2025 is World Diabetes Day (WDD) and it helps to create awareness about both type 1 and type 2 diabetes.

Type 1 Diabetes: Often appears during childhood or adolescence, but it can start at any time.

Type 2 Diabetes: Is less common in young children, but it can occur when insulin is not working properly. When your body does not produce enough insulin, glucose can accumulate in the bloodstream.

People with type 2 diabetes can help manage the disease through a change in diet, more exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, and sometimes with medication.

The chances of getting type 2 diabetes increases with age, but children can also get it.

[American Diabetes Association](#)

-- by Mary Patterson (Vice President, Director of Health)
health@ninthdistrictpta.org





Name the Bear Contest

Meet the new California State PTA bear! This friendly bear will travel across the state of California to shine a spotlight on the awesome work of our PTAs/PTSAs to help remind us that we make a difference **Today, Tomorrow, and Together**. Before the adventure begins, our new bear needs a name, and we need your help! Share your best name idea by [clicking here](#).

Submit your name idea by **November 10, 2025** for a chance to win a special visit from our bear mascot and a school celebration coordinated with your PTA and school administration.

SAVE THE DATE!

Reflections Due to Ninth District PTA

December 2, 2025
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Ninth District PTA Office
6401 Linda Vista Rd., Annex A
San Diego, CA 92111

Digital art needs to be sent in ahead of this date, but no later than December 2, 2025.

Jemima Dutra, Ninth District PTA, Reflections Chairperson
reflections@ninthdistrictpta.org

Annual Meeting and Founders' Day

The February Meeting has been moved to March.

March 11, 2026
8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Sharp Prebys Innovation and Education Center
8695 Spectrum Center Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92123

More information including registration coming soon.

Community Resources

- Dial 2-1-1 or [Go Online](#) - 211 San Diego is a free, 24-hour, confidential phone service, and searchable online database. Families can get connected with food pantries, meal programs, and other essential services.
- [San Diego Food Bank](#)
- [San Diego County Food Pantries](#)
- [YMCA of San Diego County](#) - Serves caregivers of children ages 0-16 through health, and well-being services
- [Douglas Young Youth and Family Services](#) - Provides mental health and substance abuse prevention services for children and young people ages 5-21.
- [San Diego County of Education Mental Health](#)
- [Community Resources for Immigration, Asylum, and Refugee Cases](#)

For more information on any of the above please visit [San Diego County of Education Community Resources Website](#).

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www.ninthdistrictpta.org

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