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Dear PTA Leaders and Members,

I can hardly believe it is already September and we are now a couple of months into this term. I hope everyone is settling into their positions well. The school year start is exciting as a PTA leader. I had mixed emotions watching my kiddos start their first and last year of high school. The enthusiasm, drive and passion my fellow PTA volunteers across Ninth District PTA have is inspiring. You're all amazing!

As you move along into your year, don't forget that plans change and that's OK. Don't be afraid to scrap Plan A and find a Plan B if something isn't going to work out. Just because it's "always been done that way" doesn't mean it has to continue that way. **Change is OK!** It helps us grow as an organization and as leaders.

With our membership drives in full swing, I am excited watching our social media posts for the units that have reached 100 members and other milestones. We have also been celebrating PTA birthdays, so be sure to follow our social media to help celebrate. With so many PTAs (and PTSAs!) reaching 100 members or more, please be sure you are participating in the California State PTA Membership Challenges. There are milestones for every month and some involve cash prizes! <https://capta.org/pta-leaders/run-your-pta/membership/2025-2026-membership-challenges/>

The more members we have the more powerful our voice locally, regionally, throughout California and nationally! If you haven't made it to a membership milestone yet, don't worry! Visit the National PTA website and find MANY ideas to help grow your membership. <https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/membership-resources>

Please know Ninth District PTA is here to support you as leaders, units/councils, and members. There are many resources available to you. We are setting up training opportunities so be on the lookout for information on those. If there is something you need, please let us know.

I look forward to seeing the great things our PTAs are doing around Ninth District and would love an invitation to visit your events.

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

Ninth District PTA Program Grants 2025-2026

The Ninth District PTA is offering Program Grants to unit and council PTAs/PTSAs to implement programs or events that support the PTA's mission statement and goals. **Please apply - it's easier than you think!** The Ninth District PTA Grant Program is partially funded with the \$1 per member dues forwarded through channels. Grants are available for programs in the following areas at the unit and council levels: Advocacy, Health and Welfare, Parent/student education, and Parent/student involvement. Ninth District PTA grants are a *one-time funding source* and individual awards will not exceed \$750. If you are thinking "if we just had an extra \$750 we could try this new program," now is the time to act! Funds must be used or returned by May 31, 2026. All requested paperwork must be completed and included for an application to be considered. The PTA applying for the grant must have association approval for the program. Examples of recent programs that have been funded: Art night for students and families, furnishings for a mental health "chill space" open to all students, supply closet for toiletries and clothing open to all students, 8-week program on World Music, school garden or orchard, and student lunch clubs.

Ninth District PTA Program Grants 2025-2026

The deadline for grant applications is noon on Tuesday, October 21st, 2025. Please submit the application to the Ninth District PTA via email to communityconcerns@ninthdistrictpta.org OR online via Google Forms by going to this link: <https://forms.gle/kEq2WQYBLnEnBxAT9>. You may also print and mail your application and supporting documents to the Ninth District office at 6401 Linda Vista Rd, Annex A, San Diego CA 92111 to be received by Oct 21st. Ninth District PTA will not consider applications received after the deadline. You may print the application that follows to send by mail.

Grant recipients must:

- **Submit a report detailing the project's initial goals, outcomes, expense report, photos (and video if possible,) AND any remaining funds no later than May 31, 2026.**

The Ninth District PTA Grant Committee will select grant recipients and the decision of the committee is final. Ninth District PTA will notify each grant award recipient by October 31, 2025. Grant recipient names will be included in the Ninth District PTA Annual Meeting/Founders' Day program.

Criteria

- Your PTA/PTSA must be in Good Standing; i.e., required officers, minimum number of membership dues paid and insurance paid. *The due date for insurance falls after the grant application deadline this year. We recommend that you pay your insurance as soon as the insurance payment portal opens and via ACH for immediate credit. If the insurance is not paid by the due date, the Ninth District PTA will request the PTA to return the grant funds.*
- The PTA applying for the grant must sponsor the program or event
- Only one completed application will be accepted from each unit or council
- No payment of salaries or purchase of equipment will be considered
- No grants will be awarded for Grad Night or Disaster Preparedness materials
- Honoraria for program speakers may be listed as grant expenses
- New programs/events, high percentage of students or community served, and financial need to be given strong consideration by the committee

If you have any questions, please contact Betsy Mueller at communityconcerns@ninthdistrictpta.org or 619-838-1500.

[Ninth District PTA Program Grants Application 2025-2026](#)

National PTA Grants

- Fall 2025 National PTA Program Grants -August 20 through September 24 at 11:59 p.m. PDT
- 2025-2026 Vape-Free Futures Challenge Grant - August 20 through September 24 at 11:59 p.m. PDT
- High School PTSA/PTA Youth Engagement Capacity Building Funding - August 20 through September 24 at 11:59 p.m. PDT
- State PTA Capacity Building Funding - August 20 through October 1 at 11:59 p.m. PDT
- National PTA Life Achievement Awards

For more information on the National PTA Grants above, please click on the following link: [National PTA Grants](#)

CAPTA Program Grants

CAPTA Program Grants (Deadline is October 15 at 11:59 p.m. PDT):

- Parent Education
- Cultural Arts
- Outreach Translation
- Healthy Lifestyle

For more information on the CAPTA Program Grants, please click on the following link: [CAPTA Program Grants](#)

CAPTA Scholarships

CAPTA Scholarships (Deadline is October 15 at 11:59 p.m. PDT):

- Continuing Education Scholarships
- Graduating High-School Senior Scholarships

For more information on the CAPTA Scholarships, please click on the following link: [CAPTA Scholarships](#)

National PTA Membership Dues Increase & Bylaws

If the association has agreed to absorb the additional \$1.00 increase, it is not necessary to amend and submit the bylaws. The adjustment below should be noted in the current bylaws.

With membership approval, it is also permitted to increase your dues by just \$1.00 to cover the National PTA increase. Using the example below, the only action required is to line out the ten dollars (\$10.00) and write in eleven dollars (\$11.00). Bylaws do not need to be submitted for review if the increase is passed along to members by only \$1.00.

If the association wants to increase the membership dues beyond the \$1.00, the bylaws must be submitted to the council, if in council, or district for review. This increase cannot be implemented until the bylaws have been signed and returned by the state parliamentarian.

The following example shows how to make this adjustment.

SECTION 4.

a. Each member of this association shall pay annual dues of ten dollars and cents (\$ 10.00) per member (also means per capita) to the association.

b. The annual dues shall be allocated as follows:

Three (\$3.25)

***1. ~~Two~~ dollars and twenty-five cents (~~\$2.25~~)* of each member's annual dues is payable to National PTA.

*Proviso: For the period of July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, the dues will be two dollars and twenty-five cents (\$2.25), and will increase to three dollars and twenty-five cents (\$3.25) on July 1, 2025.

***2. Two dollars (\$2.00) of each member's annual dues is payable to California State PTA.

3. One dollars and cents (\$ 1.00) of each member's annual dues is payable to Ninth District.

4. dollars and twenty-five cents (\$ 0.25) of each member's annual dues is payable to Happy Valley Council.

5. Each association shall remit to the council per capita dues of six dollars and fifty cents (\$ 6.50) annually.

-- by Jemima Dutra (Vice President, Membership Director) & Sue King (Parliamentarian)

membership@ninthdistrictpta.org & parliamentarian@ninthdistrictpta.org



Taxes

Are you ready for the dreaded T? Yes, tax filings are just a few months away for most of our units. Taxes and the RRF-1 forms need to be filed 4 ½ months after the end of the fiscal year. **But there is no need to wait for the deadline.** For most of our units that is November 15th, but check your bylaws to verify your fiscal year. If your unit has a gross income (Total income minus membership pass-through) of less than \$50,000 your unit can file the 990-N, the 199-N, and the RRF-1 with the CT-TR-1 forms. To complete these forms, you need your 2024-2025 End-of-Year Financial Report, your Bylaws, and about 45 minutes to complete the filing. They are actually easy to complete and can all be completed online. Here is a [link](#) to a video to walk you through the process. Watch for a workshop coming soon to help you file these!

If your unit makes more than \$50,000 per year we recommend you find someone who is experienced in filing tax returns for non-profit organizations to complete the 990-EZ or 990 form and for the state, the 199 form. This person may also complete the RRF-1 with the 990-EZ or 990 form attached, but if they do not, be sure

Budget

This month I would like to share some resources and reminders for treasurers.

PTAs use a gross income and gross expense bookkeeping system. This means that there should be an expense category for each income category (fundraiser, program, etc). This is important for reporting gross income for taxes. Here is a link to [Budgeting guidelines](#). Remember if you amend your budget it will need to be approved by your executive board and then approved by a two-thirds vote at the next association meeting.

Did you know that even after your budget is adopted by the association that the board still needs to authorize all expenditures before money is spent? Your Board should approve your budget, then the Association adopts your budget, and the funds should be released. That does not mean board members or committees can start spending money. Planned expenditures must be presented to the executive board in a meeting where quorum is present. An adopted motion authorizing the expense must be documented in the minutes, and then money may be spent! (And don't forget a Payment Authorization form and backup documentation for every expense is required!) So protect yourself and your PTA funds and be sure to follow the guidelines. Here is a link to an [Expense Process Graphic](#), the [Income and Expenses](#) and the [ToolKit, Finance Section](#).

that you complete them and send them in with the payment. The Registry of Charitable Trusts is part of the Attorney General's office and they assess late penalties that cannot be paid with PTA funds.

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

Finally, if you have an immediate need for help please be sure to contact either your council treasurer or myself. You do not have to wait for a training session to solve a problem.

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

Running a Great Meeting

Efficient meetings are the launching pad for PTA action. At meetings, members set goals, choose programs, and decide how to make their voice heard in the community.

The president chairs all meetings of the membership and the executive board. The key to conducting productive meetings is to be well prepared. Before the meeting, the president sets the stage for the launch by **preparing the** agenda, contacting everyone who has a report to give and making sure that materials and arrangements are complete for each item on the agenda.

At the meeting, chairing requires skills in relating to people with various backgrounds and different points of view. Consider these suggestions for working with others:

- Encourage all members to join the discussion. Listen respectfully and ask clarifying questions.
- Without stating your own opinions, point out areas of agreement between speakers. Help the group see issues in terms of what is best for students and what will help accomplish the goals of PTA.
- Encourage positive action. Urge members to concentrate on learning the facts and deciding what can be done.

Recognize that it is not the chairman's job to please all members all of the time. It is the chairman's job to keep the meeting running smoothly. Keep a sense of humor and a friendly attitude. The president who learns to manage meetings well improves the PTA's ability to have not only a successful launch, but to achieve its mission.

California State PTA Toolkit, [Link to page R10 Sample Agenda](#)

-- by Sue King (Parliamentarian)
parliamentarian@ninthdistrictpta.org



Reflections Art Program - "I Belong"

The PTA Reflections Art Program is a fun and inspiring way for students from Pre-K through 12th grade to express themselves through the arts! This year's theme, "**I Belong**", invites students to create original works in one or more of six categories: *Dance Choreography, Film Production, Literature, Music Composition, Photography, and Visual Arts*.

Getting started is easy—visit www.ninthdistrictpta.org under the programs tab for resources and entry details, or reach out to your Council Reflections Chair. Councils and Out-of-council units can contact Ninth District PTA Reflections Chair Jemima Dutra at reflections@ninthdistrictpta.org for help.

Deadlines are set by each unit and council, but we recommend mid-October for units, mid-November for councils. The deadline for councils and out of council units to submit their award of excellence entries to Ninth District PTA is December 2nd.

Reflections celebrates creativity, student voice, and imagination. Encourage your students to explore, create, and share their unique talents with our community!

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



September Spotlight: Veterans Elementary PTA

The Ninth District PTA Communications Team is excited to spotlight Veterans Elementary PTA for their outstanding work in membership. A special thank you goes out to Ruby Medina, Veterans Elementary PTA Membership Chair for her contributions to this article!

Veterans Elementary PTA was established on October 18, 2005. Their mission is to connect and create a welcoming environment where families, teachers, and staff feel supported and celebrated. Their focus is

to build a community and find meaningful ways to enhance the school experience for all children. Veterans Elementary School has over 800 students enrolled currently.

The Veterans Elementary PTA (25-26) consist of the following members: Melissa Egan - President, Marysol Victoria - Vice President, Wil Berry - Treasurer, Jenny Sherman - Secretary, Marielle Guajardo - Financial Secretary, Karen Berry - Parliamentarian, Angela Gomez - Financial Reviewer, Ruby Medina - Membership, Reyna Fernandez - Fundraising, Elvia Munoz Hernandez - Communications, Daniella Molina - Volunteers, Ana Nosal - Historian, Kristin Diaz de Sandi - Corresponding Secretary and as of August 29, 2025 - 680 members.

Veterans Elementary PTA believes that teamwork and a community spirit has helped their membership drive explode this year. The families at Veterans want to be involved, and they saw a positive energy behind the PTA executive board, and they wanted to be a part of it. The teachers, staff and parents continue to encourage each other and that encouragement has a ripple effect that helps to energize their membership.

Their current Membership Chair, Ruby Medina said, "I also want to give credit to our previous Membership Chair Reyna Fernandez, who led the PTA to top recognition for two years in a row as well. Her hard work built a strong foundation that allowed us to continue growing and keep that momentum alive this year."

The members of Veterans Elementary PTA enjoy a few incentives that include free entrance to PTA-sponsored events, and tokens of appreciation. One of the tokens that PTA members received was PTA branded keychains.

This year, Veterans Elementary PTA is excited to announce that they will host separate school dances for lower and upper grade levels. They also plan to bring back their Talent Show. In addition to all the fun and exciting activities, they also plan to provide teacher grants to support their classrooms.

They are very proud of what their school community has accomplished together. Their record membership is exciting, but their real win is the sense of belonging and teamwork. Their spirit of collaboration is what makes Veteran's Elementary such a special place.

If you know of a PTA/PTSA that should be spotlighted in our October Newsletter please fill out this [Google Form](#) and submit it by midnight of September 25, 2025.

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



Suicide Prevention Month

National Suicide Prevention Month | September 1 – 30, 2024
National Suicide Prevention Week | September 8 – 14, 2024
World Suicide Prevention Day | September 10, 2024

Please click this link: [for more information, programs and the suicide prevention awareness month toolkit.](#)

Looking for immediate assistance? Dial 9-8-8 to be connected to a national network of local crisis centers that provide free and confidential emotional support to people experiencing a suicidal, substance use, or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If this is an emergency, please call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency room.



September is Blood Cancer Awareness Month

September is Blood Cancer Awareness Month that aims to raise awareness about cancer, advocate for research and treatment advancements, and support families affected by the disease.

Purpose:

- Increase public knowledge about cancer symptoms, risk factors, and treatment options.
- Highlight the need for more research to develop effective and less toxic treatments.
- Support families facing cancer and provide resources and assistance.

[The Rhythm That Gives Us Life - YouTube Video](#)

[Click this link for more information.](#)

2026 San Diego County Scripps Regional Spelling Bee

The 2026 San Diego County Scripps Regional Spelling Bee enrollment is now open! The regional spelling bee will take place in March of 2026. The champion of the regional competition will represent San Diego County in the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington D.C. in May 2026.



School enrollment opened on August 19, 2025. Schools interested in participating can use this link to enroll: [Spelling Bee Enrollment](#). The cost per school is \$199.

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