

WHERE WE STAND

2017-18

THE BASIS FOR *ACTION*



Where We Stand is the official *position* document of the New York State PTA. It is comprised of resolution *statements* adopted by Convention delegates. These statements are intended to guide members as to what *action* to take on specific issues that affect the education, health and welfare of children and youth.

Resolutions that appear in this document are reconsidered within seven years of their original adoption or reaffirmation. At seven year increments, they are reintroduced to Convention delegates. By majority vote, delegates determine whether to adopt positions that have been recommended for *retention* (reaffirmation) or *update*, or to be *rescinded*. A resolution may be rescinded from this document when the action(s) in the resolved clauses has been taken. Rescinded resolutions are entered into an ongoing record of retired resolutions. Action may be taken through legislation, regulation or program. Delegates may also be asked to adopt a position(s) in the form of a *new* resolution, one that has not been previously presented to the delegate body. Resolutions are arranged from the most recently adopted retention(s), update(s) and new resolution(s) to the oldest within one of 14 issue categories.

The PTA is effective only through the support and action of its members. Once positions are adopted, the NYS PTA relies on local units, councils and regions to educate members and the public on the issues and to encourage grassroots advocacy.

KEY:

(R-) Retention – Convention delegates voted to retain a position after seven years, and wording remains as originally submitted.

(U-) Update – Convention delegates voted to retain after seven years, but wording has been changed or removed from the original position.

SED State Education Department

NYS New York State

HOW TO READ DATES:

Most recent year of adoption, followed by (“R-” or “U-” plus the year(s) submitted).

Examples – Retention: 2013 (R-’06); Update: 2013 (U-’06); New: 2013

The statements for *Action* that appear in this document are the “resolved” clauses of resolutions, numbered and written as adopted by Convention delegates. Since NYS PTA is a branch of the National PTA, it is important to refer to National PTA’s **Legislative Program** as an additional action guide.

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XV Index A

I Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

SALE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN SUPERMARKETS – 2017 (R-'10, R-'03, U-'96, R-'89, U-'82)

1. Oppose any legislation permitting the sale of liquor and wine in supermarkets, convenience stores and drug stores.

COMPREHENSIVE K-12 DRUG, ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION EDUCATION – 2017 (U-'10, U-'02)

1. Urge SED and the Legislature to mandate and fund comprehensive evidence-based K-12 drug, alcohol and other substance abuse prevention education. 2. Urge school districts to join community substance abuse prevention coalitions to work in partnership with other key stakeholders to reduce local substance abuse. 3. That all evidence-based substance abuse prevention program implementation be monitored and improved on a regular basis. Prevention initiatives shall be modified based on assessment of current substance use trends, as well as student, family, and community attitudes and behaviors.

DETOXIFICATION OF MINORS – 2016 (U-'09)

1. Urge that public and private licensed detoxification services and substance use disorder treatment facilities for minors be made available within close proximity to an adolescent's area of residency at or above the level of access as available to adults. 2. Seek and support legislation that gives parents and guardians rightful authority over a minor to obtain mental and medical assessment of such minor in order to determine whether he/she requires involuntary detoxification and stabilization. 3. seek and support legislation that would give substance use disorder treatment decision making authority to substance use disorder treatment professionals and remove authority from insurance companies. 4. support funding for recovery from substance use disorders, such as the Federal Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) National Youth Recovery Initiative, be implemented throughout the state. 5. Urge its units, councils, and regions to advocate for the education of parents/guardians and community members about the dangers of substance use disorder and the treatment options available for minors.

SALE OF TOBACCO TO MINORS – 2016 (U-'09, R-'02, R-'95, R-'88)

1. Urge local units to seek the cooperation of their local law enforcement agencies in enforcing the law banning the sale of tobacco and nicotine delivery products to minors and those local ordinances pertaining to it. 2. Urge its local units to communicate with their local governments expressing their desire to see stringent penalties for offense of these laws and to seek local ordinances banning cigarette machines, demanding their removal after first offense or at least regulating their locations within an establishment, making them less accessible.

POINT OF SALE ACCESSIBILITY AND ADVERTISING OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS – 2016 (U-'09, R-'02, U-'00)

1. Urge and support legislation requiring that any establishment selling tobacco, electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), or any other nicotine-containing products may not engage in point-of-sale advertising of these products, except in adult only settings. 2. Urge and support legislation that would prohibit any visible or audio advertising at the point of sale, where underage persons might be exposed.

ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES AND YOUTH – 2014

1. Urge the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to issue regulations that will address the manufacturing, ingredients, advertising, marketing and sale of electronic cigarettes; 2. Seek and support legislation that would prohibit the use of e-cigarettes in public places; 3. Urge its units and councils to educate youth, parents, school boards and local officials on the dangers of e-cigarettes.

SOCIAL HOST LAW – 2014

1. Encourage and support legislation to adopt statewide social host laws that would prohibit adults from intentionally or knowingly providing alcohol or knowingly allowing the consumption of alcohol by youth under the age of 21 who are not their children; 2. New York State PTA, its units, councils and regions provide information to students, parents and community members regarding social host laws.

PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM THE INFLUENCE OF TOBACCO USE IN MOVIES – 2014 (R-'07)

1. Endorse and support the four actions within the Smoke Free Movies Initiative, to: 1. rate new movies showing tobacco use "R" except if they reflect clear dangers or to portray a historical figure; 2. certify no payoffs or

placements from the tobacco industry; **3.** provide strong anti-smoking ads in any film with smoking; and **4.** stop identifying tobacco brands.

DRUG TESTING IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS – 2014 (U-'07, R-'00, R-'93, R-'86)

1. Oppose urinalysis testing for drugs for elementary and secondary students in schools. **2.** Encourage school districts to develop alternative methods for addressing suspected substance use by students, using school personnel who are trained in substance abuse detection. **3.** Encourage units and councils to work with school districts to establish partnerships with licensed substance abuse treatment and prevention agencies and seek funding for prevention, intervention and "after-care" programs.

COMPREHENSIVE NYS TOBACCO CONTROL & PREVENTION PROGRAM – 2013 (R-'06, U-'99)

1. Seek and support sustainable funding at the recommended CDC levels for the New York State Department of Health Tobacco Control Program, **2.** Urge that the essential components of the New York State Department of Health Tobacco Control Program be maintained and enhanced.

UNDERAGE ACCESS RESULTING FROM THE DIRECT SHIPPING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES – 2012 (U-'05, R-'98)

1. Seek and support legislation that would make the sale of alcoholic beverages over the Internet to minors and the subsequent delivery to minors a felony with increased fines and penalties. **2.** Seek and support legislation that would require proper labeling of shipments to indicate that shipment must be signed for by a person over 21 years of age with photo identification. **3.** Urge units and councils to educate their members about the ease of access to alcohol on the Internet, by mail, by telephone and through the use of credit/debit cards and any other electronic payment methods. **4.** Urge units and councils to educate their members about the risks involved and the need for vigilance in safeguarding credit cards.

MARIJUANA – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98, U-'91, R-'84)

1. Reaffirm its position against the legalization of marijuana, except for medical use approved by the Food and Drug Administration, and continue to work toward the education of children and parents regarding harmful effects from continued use of marijuana.

INFLUENCE OF MEDIA ON TOBACCO USE – 2011 (U-'04)

1. Encourage units/councils to educate the public that viewing media that depict tobacco use greatly increases the probability that children and youth will experiment with and become addicted to tobacco.

II Citizenship & Equality of Opportunity

STUDENT PARTICIPATION – 2016 (R-'09, R-'02, R-'95, R-'88)

1. PTA units in secondary schools, PTA councils and PTA districts be encouraged to have students on their boards. **2.** Urge school boards and administrators to establish channels for regular dialogue with secondary school students representing a cross-section of the students enrolled in the school district.

PREJUDICE – 2015 (U-'08, U-'01, U-'95, R-'88)

1. Express condemnation of all hate crimes, acts of desecration directed against houses of worship and cemeteries, and acts of violence, intimidation and harassment of individuals because of their actual or perceived race, ethnicity or religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, disability or other personal characteristics. **2.** Support and encourage law enforcement agencies to continue to apprehend and, where applicable, prosecute individuals who are responsible for acts of racism, vandalism, discrimination and harassment. **3.** Urge that all local PTA units and councils in cooperation with schools and community agencies aid in developing more effective programs in human relations, or encourage their school districts to use already developed curricula available through the State Education Department or other agencies, thereby encouraging the respect for the rights of all humanity.

MULTICULTURAL IN-SERVICE – 2015 (U-'08, U-'01, U-'94, R-'87)

1. Support updates to the Commissioner's Regulations in line with New York State Teaching Standards (Element I.5, Element II.5, Element IV.1 and Element VI.3) to require all candidates for professional certification to receive culturally responsive training that would prepare them to serve the needs of a diverse student body. **2.** PTA units

and councils encourage their local school district to provide culturally responsive in-service instruction to teachers, administrators and other school-related personnel that would prepare them to serve the needs of students and families from diverse ethnicities and cultures.

FINES AND/OR SERVICES FOR VANDALISM – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98, U-'91, R-'84)

1. Urge that school districts and courts provide counseling or other preventive educational measures for all students who have been found guilty of vandalism to school property. 2. Urge that when courts find a minor guilty of vandalizing school property, school boards set restitution through the court in the form of service to the school community and fines to cover the cost of the vandalism to the legal limit. 3. If the vandals and/or their parents are unable to provide full monetary compensation, additional service to the school or community be sought in lieu of, or in addition to, the fines. 4. For those incidents of vandalism which are not brought to the courts, school districts adopt policies establishing consequences such as service to the school or community for the students involved.

FAIR HOUSING – 2012 (U-'05, R-'98, R-'91, R-'84)

1. Urge its units to be aware of discriminatory housing practices against families with children, particularly single-parent, minority, and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) families and families of children and adults with special needs. 2. Urge its units to promote programs disseminating information of fair housing laws and the rights of individuals under those laws. 3. Support measures to strengthen existing laws to promote stronger enforcement of fair housing laws.

ENFORCEMENT OF CURRENT REGULATIONS FOR PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES – 2011 (R-'04, R-'97, R-'90, R-'83)

1. Oppose any changes in federal or state laws and/or regulations that could lead to delays or extensions of state deadlines regarding the evaluation and appropriate placement of children and youth with disabilities. 2. Oppose any changes in federal or state laws and/or regulations that would allow any increase in class size. 3. Urge the Commissioner of Education to strongly enforce all the current regulations regarding the education of children and youth with disabilities.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROGRAM – 2011 (R-'04, R-'97, R-'90)

1. Encourage development and support of the Community Schools Program in areas where needed and appropriate. 2. Promote continued allocation of the resources necessary for the continuance and expansion of the Community Schools Program.

III Cooperative Role of Parents and Educational Professionals

PARENT PARTICIPATION – 2016 (U-'09, R-'02, R-'95, R-'88)

1. New York State Education Department advise and inform PTAs of the existence of all mandated school committees. 2. Urge the NYSED and the state and local agencies and the school boards to use the PTA to serve on mandated school committees concerning children, wherever appropriate. 3. New York State PTA and its regions make available parent representatives to serve wherever appropriate. 4. PTA units and councils make themselves available to their school districts to serve on school committees, wherever appropriate.

REGIONAL COMMISSION TO STUDY PART 200 REGULATIONS – 2016 (U-'09, U-'02, R-'95, R-'88)

1. Urge the State Education Department Regional Offices to maintain ongoing two-way communication, with parents from PTA/SEPTA and BOCES on a regular basis and share information through the state-funded parent centers. 2. Regional communication includes identification of any unmet needs within the region regarding the education of children with disabling conditions. 3. Regional reporting of data and evaluation of services provided to children with disabling conditions be shared with parents and educators.

INVOLVING PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION PLANS – 2015 (R-'08, R-'01, R-'94)

1. Urge the Commissioner of Education and the Board of Regents to amend Part 200.2 (c) of the Commissioner's Regulations to require that District Special Education Plans be a product of a committee including parents, teachers and others, the specific number of participants and selection process being designated by the regulations. 2. That the parents be selected by school-related parent organizations that represent the interests of parents of students with special needs. 3. That the District Special Education Plans be required to include a long term general direction of where each district plans to be in regard to the provision of special education services. 4. That the District Special Education Plans be required to include all program aspects of the provision of special education services.

EDUCATION FOR HIPAA RIGHT TO PRIVACY AND HEALTH CARE PROXY – 2014

1. Urge educational institutions to create and deliver programs and make information available regarding HIPAA Privacy Laws and health care proxies to young adults, parents and guardians; 2. Encourage educational institutions to make health care proxy forms available to students upon turning 18; 3. Encourage PTA units and councils to educate parents and school districts about the HIPAA Law and the importance of proper management of a young adult's right to privacy.

CPSE PARENT MEMBER – 2014 (R-'07, U-'00)

1. Urge that a mandated "parent member" to the CPSE Committee as established by the IDEA '97 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004) be eligible to serve for five years past the designated time that their child is declassified by the committee or ages out of CPSE level services.

504 COMMITTEES – 2014 (R-'07, R-'00)

1. Support a mandate in New York State regulations, regarding students covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, requiring that the parent of a child/youth who is referred to a 504 Committee be a member of that committee along with mandated school personnel to meet, assist with and formulate decisions regarding accommodations and service for the child/youth.

PARENTS ON SHARED DECISION-MAKING COMMITTEES – 2013 (R-'06, U-'99, R-'92)

1. Recommend that the New York State Education Department provide to all unit and council presidents and region PTA leaders a copy of Regulation 100.11 as adopted by the Board of Regents. 2. NYS PTA urge the training of participants in the process of shared decision-making and the showcasing of school districts that have school-based planning teams with parents as active participants. 3. Recommend that units, councils and regions sponsor training for parents on the process of shared decision-making, group dynamics, interpersonal skills, listening skills. 4. Advocate that in the planning for these school-based planning teams that training of all team members be included as part of any policy adopted by the school district. 5. Urge that school districts train the team together and that parents are included in that training.

ABSENTEE NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98, R-'91, U-'84)

1. To seek legislation that would repeal Sections 2c and 2d of New York State Education Law 3213. 2. Seek legislation that would require that persons in parental relationships of all students grades K-12 be notified that they may submit a written request for notification of a child's absence from school. 3. The written request include the telephone number of the person or persons to be notified and any other information to facilitate communication. 4. Said notification take place by the most prompt and expedient manner possible by a person or persons authorized by the school district. 5. Urge its units and councils to educate persons in parental relationships as to the reasons for and significance of completion of the request for notification form.

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98, R-'91, R-'84)

1. Urge its regions, councils and units to place greater emphasis on training its members to analyze programs, curricula and school budgets and to better comprehend education law and school district policies and procedures, thereby preparing members to engage in more knowledgeable discussion with educators, school boards and legislators in order to convey priorities, innovative approaches and options necessary to maintain quality education for all children.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PARENT MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION (CSE) AND THE COMMITTEE ON PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION (CPSE) – 2011 (U-'04, R-'97, U-'90)

1. Support maintaining a parent member as a mandated member of the CPSE and CSE committees. 2. Urge the New York State Education Department's Office for Special Education Services to require training through the Special Education Training and Resource Center (SETRC) for the parent member on the CSE and CPSE.

IV Education Emphasis

COMPULSORY EDUCATION – 2017 (U-'10, R-'03, R-'96, R-'89)

1. Support legislation that would amend the Education Law to change the compulsory education attendance age to eighteen.

ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND SETTINGS FOR STUDENTS AT RISK – 2017 (R-'10, U-'03, R-'96, R-'89)

1. Support the educational concept of alternative high school programs and settings for students at risk. 2. Seek adequate fiscal resources from the State to support alternative high school programs and settings for students at risk that include the provision of counseling services, and further that the funding be unrestricted in nature so that school districts have the flexibility to support programs designed to meet the particular needs of their students at risk.

THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT – 2016 (U-'09, U-'02)

1. The reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) be for a minimum of six years before it is necessary to reauthorize again. 2. Pursuant to the DSM 5 criteria, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder be specifically added to the list of official classifications in the IDEA. 3. A "Parent Member" be included in the official committee membership in the IDEA, and that the IDEA provide only the parent/guardian with the option to "waive" the requirement that the "Parent Member" be in attendance at the meeting. 4. A school psychologist be included in the official committee membership in the IDEA. 5. The IDEA provide full funding (Full funding is defined as 40% of the National Average of Per Pupil Expenditure in the 1975, 1997, and 2004 legislation) to the states and the school districts for programs and services, and that the full funding be designated in the federal education budget each year. 6. the U.S. Department of Education monitor the IDEA requirements for high school graduation, and that any student, regardless of receiving special education-related services, will be required to meet statewide assessments and credit requirements for graduation with a state-recognized diploma.

SIGN LANGUAGE – 2016 (R-'09, U-'02, R-'95, U-'88)

1. The NYS PTA units and councils encourage their school districts to offer sign language as a second language option.

SPECIAL EDUCATION – 2016 (R-'09, U-'02, R-'95, R-'88)

1. Urge the State Education Department to change the regulations to read that all children with disabling conditions from age 11 and up are entitled to career and technical training for "real work" by using the New York State Education Department Career Development Occupational Study (CDOS) Standards. 2. The NYS PTA urge the New York State Education Department to monitor school districts carefully to ensure continued compliance.

SECURING A NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ENDORSED DIPLOMA FOR ALL STUDENTS – 2015 (U-'08)

1. Urge the New York State Education Department to continue to offer a variety of options of diplomas that meet the unique needs of all students and that will ensure opportunities for these students to graduate and earn or receive a valid diploma recognized by higher education and the work place. 2. Urge the New York State Education Department to offer an additional standards-based diploma for students who cannot successfully fulfill Regents requirements.

REGENTS EXAMINATION SCHEDULES – 2015 (R-'08)

1. Urge the New York State Education Department to maintain the current practice of administering Regents Examinations only during designated Regents Exam periods.

GIFTED AND TALENTED IDENTIFICATION PROGRAMS – 2015 (R-'08, R-'01, R-'94, R-'87)

1. Urge the New York State Education Department to continue to enforce regulations as found in Part 117 of amendments to the Commissioner's regulations, requiring the identification of gifted and talented students and the notification of their parents. 2. Seek and support legislation that would mandate instructional educational programs and funding for these programs for students identified as gifted and talented. 3. Urge public schools to establish Committees for Gifted and Talented, consisting of school administrators, teachers of the gifted and talented, parents of gifted and talented students, and other appropriately trained school and community specialists, to assist in identification of and determination of appropriate educational programs and services for these children. 4. Urge the Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department to require undergraduate teacher training so that prospective teachers recognize and understand the unique characteristics and needs of gifted and talented children. 5. That in-service education in the instruction of gifted and talented children be urged for all teachers in the school districts in New York State and be enhanced by leadership, materials and methods of instruction by the New York State Education Department.

GIFTED AND TALENTED COUNSELING – 2015 (R-'08, R-'01, R-'94, R-'87)

1. Urge the Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department to require guidance counselors to provide direct and on-going services to address the special needs of children who have been identified as gifted and talented.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT – 2015 (R-'08, U-'01, R-'94, R-'87)

1. Urge the New York State Education Department to continue to support staff development programs tailored to district needs. 2. Urge the State legislature to provide consistent and appropriate funding for staff development programs.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION – 2015 (R-'08, R-'01, R-'94, R-'87)

1. Urge local Boards of Education to establish in-school suspension programs that provide for continuity of instruction.

RESTRUCTURE THE REGENTS COMPONENT RETESTING SYSTEM – 2014 (U-'07)

1. Urge the New York State Education Department to reinstate and restructure component retesting to: 1) include all curriculum areas in which regents exams are offered, and; 2) be aligned with the Regents exams content and format. 2. Urge the New York State Education Department to simplify the component retesting program for easier access by: 1) scheduling component retests during all Regents exam periods, but not to conflict with other scheduled Regents exams; 2) allowing students with a score of at least 55, but not greater than 64, on a Regents exam to take a component retest; and 3) allowing students to sit for component retests regardless of grade level after receiving appropriate review in the component area.

HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH – 2013 (R-'06)

1. That NYS PTA units, councils and regions disseminate information and educate parents, students and the community on the importance of full access to education for homeless children and youth, including emancipated youth.

DEFINITION AND IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED – 2013 (R-'06, R-'99, R-'92, R-'85)

1. Urge the State Education Department to ask for increased funding to provide more stringent enforcement to ensure that both a district's gifted and talented students be identified to the full extent of the definition and appropriate programs be provided to address the three areas of gifted and talented as defined by the New York State Education Department. 2. The district be required to notify the parents or guardians of a student identified as gifted or talented regardless of whether or not a district has a program of gifted and talented education to meet their needs. 3. To urge its units and councils to encourage their local school districts to comply with the New York State Education Department regulations.

MIGRANT CHILDREN – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98, R-'91, U-'84)

1. Encourage local and state educational agencies to develop and implement processes that improve migrant students' access to secondary school services in the following areas: instructional opportunities, credit accumulation and counseling and support services.

RECESS FOR STUDENTS – 2011 (R-'04)

1. Urge the Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department to encourage every school district to offer at least twenty minutes a day of supervised, unstructured time (recess) for all elementary students in New York State. 2. Urge that recess not be eliminated from a child's school day due to academic failure and that teachers, parents, and administrators consider alternative behavior modification methods before denying any child recess activities.

MULTIPLE DAY TEST ADMINISTRATION FOR ALL STUDENTS WITH EXTENDED TIME AND TWO REGENTS ON THE SAME DAY – 2011 (R-'04)

1. Seek to have the New York State Education Department revise its policy so all students, who have extended test time of any duration as determined by the Committee on Special Education or 504 Committee, be permitted to use multiple day test accommodation when scheduled for two Regents exams on the same day, regardless of the student's particular disability or management needs. 2. Seek to have the New York State Education Department revise its procedure that will grant the local school district CSE or 504 Committee the authority to make the decision to allow the use of multiple day test accommodation with an obligation to inform the NYS Education Department, through its building principal, but not require the New York State Education Department's approval for accommodation.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS – 2011 (U-'02, U-'01, R-'94, R-'87)

1. Urge the State Education Department and the Board of Regents to require certified school counselors in all public secondary schools. 2. Urge the State Education Department and the Board of Regents to establish a maximum number of students per school counselor in all public secondary schools and that this ratio not exceed 200 to 1.

V Environment

USE OF POLYSTYRENE PRODUCTS – 2017 (U-'10, U-'03, R-'96, R-'89)

1. Seek and support legislation that would ban or phase out the use of polystyrene products at all state and public school facilities until infrastructure is in place to recycle these products in an environmentally safe manner. 2. Urge the state to encourage local municipalities to issue their own ban or phase out plan of polystyrene products until infrastructure is in place to recycle these products in an environmentally safe manner. 3. New York State PTA and its constituent units work to eliminate or phase out the use of polystyrene products at all PTA-sponsored events until recycling infrastructure is available to recycle these products in an environmentally safe manner. 4. Encourage legislation that would further the recycling capabilities of all polystyrene products in an environmentally safe manner throughout the entire state of New York.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT – 2017 (R-'10, U-'03, R-'96, R-'89)

1. Urge the use of pesticides only as last resort and the promotion of alternative pest control methods in order to protect children's health, safety and environment.

MERCURY REDUCTION IN THE ENVIRONMENT – 2016 (U-'09, U-'02)

1. Support legislation to reduce mercury discharge into the environment and to regulate industry contributing to mercury pollution by emissions or in products. 2. Encourage its units and councils to inform and educate the public as to the hazards of mercury exposure and means of reducing mercury exposure including the proper clean up and disposal of mercury-containing bulbs. 3. New York State PTA units and councils encourage their local school boards to eliminate or reduce the use of mercury products in the schools.

LABELING OF MILK PRODUCTS – 2016 (U-'09, R-'02, U-'01, R-'94)

1. Urge the New York State Legislators to mandate that all milk coming from cows fed, injected with, or that have been administered hormones be labeled.

EDUCATION ON THE SAFE USE OF DEET– 2016

1. Urge units and councils to educate parents, teachers, and the community on the correct usage and potential dangers of incorrect usage of products containing DEET using the most current available positions of reliable medical experts, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOs) AND GENETICALLY ENGINEERED (GE) FOODS– 2016

1. Support legislation and regulations that require mandatory labeling, with clear and conspicuous words, of GMO and GE foods. 2. Support legislation and regulations that restrict pesticide tolerant GMOs, and GE foods, from use in food and beverages provided by school meal programs and vending services. 3. Until such legislation and regulations are in effect, all school districts be encouraged to avoid the use of foods and beverages that contain pesticide tolerant GMOs, and GE foods, provided by the school meal programs and vending services. 4. Encourage units and councils to educate parents and community members on the health and environmental effects of pesticide tolerant GMOs, and GE food, products.

BIO-SOLIDS IN NEW YORK STATE – 2015

1. Seek and support legislation banning human bio-solids from being used in public areas that are near schools, playgrounds or other areas frequented by youth until such time that independent studies on the environmental impact can be performed and bio-solids are determined to be safe. 2. Urge Congress, the New York State Legislature, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to regulate and control how human bio-solids are to be used.

CELLULAR PHONE TOWERS – 2014 (R-'07, R-'00)

1. Support legislation that would encourage local communities, including parents and school officials, to regulate the placement of cell towers and cell tower antennas particularly in schools and areas where children congregate. 2. Support continued research into the long term effects of radio frequency and microwave frequencies on humans, especially as they apply to children. 3. Seek to educate parents and school officials as to the current debate over the placement of cell towers and antennas.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS – 2014 (U-'07, R-'00, R-'93)

1. Support legislation and regulations that will reduce indoor air pollution and promote the highest, safest levels for indoor air quality levels in schools.

PROTECTION OF GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES – 2014 (U-'07, R-'00, R-'93, R-'86)

1. Support protecting water recharge systems to maintain the natural filtering process to refresh underground aquifers. 2. Support the concept of safe resource recovery as an appropriate way of handling solid waste, eliminating the leaching of contaminants into our fresh water system. 3. Encourage and support the effective management of groundwater supplies through research programs to develop better techniques for protecting and conserving the resource and monitoring groundwater supply and quality. 4. Encourage education of children and youth regarding the need for conservation and water management.

SOIL CONTAMINATION ON SCHOOL GROUNDS – 2014 (U-'07, R-'00, R-'93, R-'86)

1. Support such efforts as to determine what levels of soil contamination by toxic substances are acceptable on school grounds. 2. Support legislation to designate levels of safety for all ground and soil contaminants on school grounds. 3. Support legislation to designate levels of acceptable exposure to children on school playgrounds and athletic fields. 4. Encourage existing agencies, such as the NYS Dept. of Health, Dept. of Environmental Conservation and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to determine immediate health risks and limits of safe contact for children and youth on all existing sites by encouraging the testing of soil for all toxic ground and soil contaminants. 5. If soil testing demonstrates contaminant levels exceeding safe or acceptable levels for human health or the environment, the affected areas should immediately be closed to use by the school community and fully remediated. Every effort should be made to ensure that the party(ies) responsible for contamination are held liable, but cleanups should not be delayed while the party(ies) are identified.

IMPLEMENTING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE ACTION – 2013 (R-'06, R-'99, U-'92)

1. Seek and support legislation on the national, state and local levels which encourages conservation of resources and use of more environmentally sound, renewable energy sources. 2. Urge the New York State Education Department to develop environmental outcomes so that each student will acquire knowledge of the ecological consequences of choices in the use of the environment and natural resources. 3. Urge local school districts to use school facilities as environmental living, learning laboratories to promote understanding of interdependency and how human activities relate to our ecosystems. 4. Encourage the New York State Education Department to accept collegiate level Environmental Science Courses for teachers seeking general science certification.

AIR QUALITY STANDARDS IN INDOOR ICE ARENAS – 2012

1. Urge the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) to establish air quality standards of less than 25 parts per million (ppm) for carbon monoxide (CO) within enclosed ice arenas. 2. Urge the NYSDOH to establish air quality standards of less than .5 ppm of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) within enclosed ice arenas. 3. Urge the NYSDOH to establish air quality standards of less than 50 micrograms per cubic meter for coarse particulate matter (PM 10) and less than 25 micrograms per cubic meter for fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) within enclosed ice arenas. 4. Support legislation for low emission or electric resurfacers, including proper maintenance thereof, within enclosed ice arenas. 5. Seek and support legislation that requires that adequate ventilation and the installation of air quality measuring devices in all enclosed ice arenas. 6. Seek and support regulations requiring proper training of operators and staff in maintenance and use of equipment and in emergency procedures. 7. Urge its units, councils and regions to advocate for the education of parents/guardians and community members about the dangers of elevated levels of CO, NO₂ and particulate matter in enclosed ice arenas. 8. New York State forward this resolution to National PTA for its consideration.

REDUCING AND PHASING OUT THE USE OF POLYVINYL CHLORIDE (PVC) PLASTIC IN NEW YORK SCHOOLS – 2012

1. Seek and support legislation that would reduce and phase out the use of PVC products at all New York State school facilities. 2. Urge schools districts and the New York State Education Department to develop green procurement policies to reduce and phase out the use and purchase of PVC building materials and office and education supplies in school facilities where safer cost-effective alternatives are available. 3. New York State PTA and its constituent units educate parents and community members about the potential health effects of PVC and work to eliminate PVC products at all PTA-sponsored events. 4. New York State PTA forward this resolution to the National PTA for its consideration.

PAPER RECYCLING AND RECYCLED PAPER USE – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98, R-'91)

1. Urge units and councils to reduce paper waste and encourage schools to reduce paper waste. 2. Encourage PTAs at local, region, state and national levels to use recycled paper in their PTA work. 3. Urge National PTA to promote the use of recycled paper and paper recycling in schools.

SEWAGE WASTE PROBLEMS – 2011 (U-'04, R-'97, R-'90, R-'83)

1. Support state legislation for environmental air quality and health risk studies of proposed and existing sewage plants. 2. Urge authorities to establish regulations and enforce existing statutes and regulations in regard to indiscriminate use of sanitary sewage systems for the disposal of unlawful material (toxic waste) by industrial, commercial, and residential users.

TOXIC ART SUPPLIES – 2011 (U-'04, R-'97, R-'90, R-'83)

1. Urge school districts to evaluate the art products used in their schools and to seek removal of such products as may be necessary for the health and safety of students. 2. Work to educate parents and community members about how to identify unsafe or toxic art supplies.

HAZARDS FROM LAND, WATER, AIR, NOISE AND LIGHT POLLUTION – 2010 (U-'03, U-'96, R-'89, U-'82)

1. Support federal and state programs such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, the "Super Fund" and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. 2. The New York State PTA encourage its units and councils to inform and educate the public as to the hazards of mercury exposure and means of reducing mercury exposure including the proper clean up and disposal of mercury containing bulbs.

VI Financial Support for Public Education

ESTABLISH A LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE TO REFORM STATE AID TO EDUCATION FORMULAS – 2017 (U-'10, R-'03)

1. Encourage the NYS Legislature to establish a task force that includes all key stakeholders to study current and proposed school aid formulas and develop a funding solution that is adequate, equitable, predictable and understandable.

REFORM OF STATE AID TO EDUCATION – 2016 (R-'09, R-'02, R-'95, R-'88)

1. Support and encourage legislation that would set a minimum level of state aid of at least 50% of the total educational costs for the state. 2. Support and encourage legislation to create built-in minimum levels of funding for state-prescribed staffing ratios and other mandates.

FUNDING FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS – 2015 (R-'08, U-'01)

1. Urge and support legislation to change the method of funding charter schools to eliminate the adverse impact on public school districts. 2. That the NYS PTA support legislation that will hold charter schools to the same financial accountability as all public schools.

SUPPLEMENTAL LOTTERY AID TO EDUCATION – 2014 (R-'07, R-'00, R-'93, R-'86)

1. Urge and support enforcement of existing legislation which would clearly provide 45% of the lottery proceeds as supplemental funds for education in addition to the allocated amount from the state's general revenues.

FUNDING FOR EDUCATION MANDATES – 2013 (U-'06, R-'99, R-'92, R-'85)

1. Encourage funding by the State Legislature for new educational and existing mandates.

EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF STATE AID – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98, R-'91, R-'84)

1. Support development of an equitable distribution of state funds to provide equal educational opportunities for all public school students. 2. Continue to urge the legislature and the governor to increase financial support of public education.

MANDATED SCHOOL BUDGET VOTES – 2011 (R-'04, R-'97)

1. PTA units and councils educate their community on the effects of a late state budget on its school district. 2. PTA units and councils urge the legislature to meet its constitutional duty by passing the budget on time.

LEVELING UP LOW WEALTH DISTRICTS – 2011 (R-'04, R-'97, R-'90, R-'83)

1. Continue to support state aid formulas that provide for more equitable educational opportunity by leveling up the low wealth districts.

VII Health and Nutrition

FOOD INSPECTION AND REGULATION – 2017 (R-'10, R-'03, R-'96, R-'89, U-'82)

1. Support the proper inspection and regulation of food by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and other agencies, such as the NYS Dept. of Health (DOH), to prevent mislabeling and to detect contamination.

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS – 2017 (U-'10, R-'03, R-'96, R-'89, U-'82)

1. Oppose any cuts in federal children's nutritional support programs, including but not limited to the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. 2. Urge Congress to reauthorize child nutrition programs and SNAP. 3. Urge school districts and schools to operate school breakfast/lunch programs where there is a demonstrated need.

PREVENTIVE HEALTH PROGRAMS – 2017 (R-'10, U-'03, U-'96, R-'89, U-'82)

1. Strongly support age-appropriate preventive health programs such as: prenatal and well-child care, newborn screenings, immunizations, nutritional screenings, dental care, vision and hearing screenings, scoliosis and blood pressure screenings, lead poisoning and tuberculin skin tests, and voluntary screening for genetic diseases.

SCHOOL NURSES – 2016 (R-'09, R-'02, R-'95, R-'88)

1. Encourage its units and councils to assess with the staff and school boards of their districts the risks of having inadequate health care for students. 2. Urge the State Education Department to mandate a full-time registered nurse in every school building.

ATHLETIC TRAINERS – 2015 (R-'08, R-'01, R-'94, U-'87)

1. Urge the New York State Education Department to require each school district to have a NYS certified athletic trainer available during practices and home games of secondary school sports.

HERBAL CIGARETTES – 2014 (U-'07, U-'00)

1. Encourage local units and councils to educate parents and children about the potential dangers of herbal cigarettes, including the Synthetic Cannabinoid Spice. 2. Urge the State Education Department to update school health curricula to include information on the dangers of smoking herbal cigarettes.

REASONABLE ACCESS TO FOOD DURING SCHOOL – 2014 (U-'07, R-'00, R-'93)

1. Urge the State Education Department to revise Commissioner's Regulation 7 CRF, Part 210 to give children and youth the same protection afforded to adults in the workforce and require school districts to provide all children and youth with access to lunch no earlier than two and one half hours and no later than four hours after the start of the school day for each full day pupil attending pre-kindergarten through grade twelve.

FOOD ANIMAL PRODUCTION AND ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE – 2013

1. Urge Congress and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to act to protect human health by prohibiting the overuse and misuse of antibiotics in food animal production. 2. Seek and support legislation to improve labeling of meat and poultry products at federal and state levels to adequately and accurately identify antibiotic use during food production. 3. Seek and support legislation requiring public disclosure on the amount, type and purpose of antibiotic use during food animal production. 4. Support initiatives that would encourage local school districts to purchase meat and poultry products sourced from animals receiving antibiotics only for treatment of disease. 5. Encourage PTA units and councils to educate parents, school district staff and Boards of Education about antibiotic overuse and misuse in food animal production and its contribution to antibiotic-resistant infections in adults and children. 6. Forward to National PTA for consideration at their convention.

TRAINING OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES IN THE CARE OF A CHOKING VICTIM – 2013 (R-'06)

1. Support regulation or legislation that would require, at minimum, one school employee trained in the care of the choking victim to be present at each food service period, in each lunch room, 2. Advocate for funding to be provided to school districts for the training of school employees in the care of the choking victim.

INFECTION CONTROL TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS – 2013 (U-'05, R-'98, R-'91)

1. Urge the State Education Department to require school districts to develop and implement infection control and universal precautions policies for all volunteers to ensure the safety and health of all students and adults in the school setting. 2. Encourage its units and councils to participate in infection control and universal precautions in conjunction with the school district for those members volunteering in the school.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE INSURANCE PARITY – 2012 (U-'05)

1. Urge PTA units and councils to work to educate parents and the school community about parity issues and available mental health and substance abuse services and programs.

HEALTHY CHOICES – 2012 (R-'05)

1. Raise awareness of and educate children and youth, parents, school personnel, and the community about healthy choices; 2. Encourage units and councils to advocate for healthy choices in the home, school and community; 3. Urge parents to participate in school wellness committees and work to establish policies regarding healthy choices; 4. Encourage decision makers, including legislators, to implement, support and fund programs and activities that foster healthy choices.

ELIMINATION OF TRANS FATS FROM SCHOOL FOODS – 2012 (R-'05)

1. NYS PTA is concerned about obesity and other diet-related diseases and their effects upon children and youth and supports the elimination of non-naturally occurring trans fats from school foods. 2. NYS PTA actively work to reduce non-naturally occurring trans fats from school meals, à la cart vending choices, foods available for sale at after-school events and other events, and foods used in fundraising. 3. Encourage units and councils to work actively to educate school administrators, faculty, food service providers, parents, and children about healthy food choices.

AWARENESS OF MEDICATION MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98)

1. Urge units and councils to encourage school districts to ensure implementation of school policies and procedures regarding administration and management of prescription medication. 2. Urge units and councils to provide programs and information to raise awareness through education of adults in a parental role regarding access to medications. 3. Support annual in-service programs for faculty and staff that include awareness of symptoms of identified medical conditions for students under their supervision.

INGREDIENT LABELING – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98, R-'91, R-'84)

1. Support legislation that would require full disclosure, in clear language, of all ingredients and additives, including chemical additives in water, and on food, drug and cosmetic labels. 2. Encourage its units and councils to educate its members as to the importance of reading labels and understanding the possible significance of the effects of the listed ingredients on the human body in order to protect the nutrition and health of children.

HEALTHY SCHOOL FOODS – 2011 (R-'04)

1. Support initiatives that would encourage local school districts to provide optional plant-based vegetarian (vegan) school entrees and nutrition education materials and instruction; eliminate high calorie, high fat, low nutrition desserts from the menu; eliminate à la carte and vending items that are low nutrient, high calorie, high fat or high sodium and replace them with high nutrient and generally low calorie items; and support Farm to School programs, including organic foods where possible. 2. Encourage its units/councils to educate parents and school district staff about healthy eating patterns, including plant-based entrees. 3. Urge its units/councils to participate in the decision making about implementing, within their own schools and school districts, the recommendations of the NYS Legislative Resolutions J3971 (Senate) and K1888 (Assembly), and to support any legislative resolutions that promote healthy choices, such as vegetarian, in school lunch programs.

TO REQUIRE COORDINATING COUNCILS ON SCHOOL HEALTH AS A MEANS OF EFFECTIVELY USING SCHOOL TIME – 2011 (R-'04, R-'97)

1. Urge the Board of Regents and the State Education Department to require every school district to establish a district-wide comprehensive school health and wellness advisory council which would include health and education professionals, parents, community leaders and other stakeholders.

HEAD INJURIES – 2011 (U-'04, R-'97)

1. Seek and support legislation establishing a state tracking system for head injuries in all children and students and a record that would follow each child and student from year to year. 2. Urge local school districts and community athletic organizations to include the addition of head injuries on health summaries and yearly physical forms. 3. Local units and councils educate their communities on the dangers of head injuries.

INERT INGREDIENTS – 2011 (U-'04, R-'97)

1. Urge and support legislation which would require pesticide manufacturers and formulators to disclose by product labeling the total composition of pesticide products including each inert ingredient in the formulation.

CPR/AED AND FIRST AID – 2011 (R-'04, U-'97, R-'90, R-'83)

1. Encourage the New York State Education Department to require, and encourage funding for, all schools to provide the opportunity for all school personnel to receive annual training in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR)/automated external defibrillation (AED) and first aid.

RAPID WEIGHT LOSS DIETS – 2011 (R-'04, R-'97, R-'90, R-'83)

1. Encourage school districts to include as part of nutrition education the possible health hazards of rapid weight loss diets. 2. That coaches not encourage rapid weight loss or gain for participation in sports programs.

VIII Juvenile Protection

BACKGROUND CHECKS OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES AND CONTRACTORS – 2017 (U-'10, U-'03, R-'96, R-'89)

1. Urge school districts to verify that background checks are performed on employees of companies under contract with the school district or any persons in an employee, consultant, or trainee/internship situation not covered by SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act) who may come in direct contact with the school district's children. 2. Urge school districts' boards of education to have specific policies that define what appropriate background checks should be.

HAZING – 2016 (R-'09, U-'02, U-'01, R-'94, R-'87)

1. Urge that schools educate their students and that PTAs educate their members as to the possible dangers that may occur in hazings.

TREATMENT OF PERSONS IN NEED OF SUPERVISION (PINS) – 2015 (U-'08, R-'01, R-'98, R-'91, R-'84)

1. Urge local communities to establish individual and family counseling services, crisis mediation centers – where conflicts may be worked out to maintain family stability and programs for the identification and treatment of youth at risk for adjudication as Persons In Need Of Supervision. 2. Seek to have services and resources delivered to youth adjudicated as Persons In Need Of Supervision in such a way as to keep the family together whenever possible. 3. Oppose the placement of youth adjudicated as Persons In Need Of Supervision in large correctional institutions or in facilities far from their homes.

DOMESTIC AND/OR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE/SEXUAL HARASSMENT – 2015 (U-'08, R-'01, R-'94)

1. Support implementation of family life curricula in every school. 2. Support inclusion of Domestic and/or Intimate Partner Violence/Sexual Harassment education as part of a comprehensive health education curriculum including family life education. 3. Urge local PTA units to bring these issues to the attention of PTA members and youth in their communities, and encourage parent participation in prevention and awareness of sexual harassment, and domestic and/or intimate partner violence. 4. Focus on prevention of domestic and/or intimate partner violence through education and publications. 5. Urge school districts to adopt a formal policy on dating violence.

TO PROMOTE NON-VIOLENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION ON TELEVISION – 2015 (U-'08, R-'01, R-'94)

1. Urge the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) to review the incidence of violence in relation to the incidence of non-violent conflict resolution whenever a media outlet seeks a license renewal. 2. Urge the FCC to demand proof that the ratio of violence to non-violent conflict resolution presented by a media outlet be in the public interest. 3. In cases where the ratio given is not deemed to be in the public interest by the FCC, the FCC to refuse renewal of that license.

PROTECTION OF STUDENT PRIVACY – 2015 (R-'08, R-'01, R-'94, R-'87)

1. Urge the New York State Education Department to investigate and report currently existing school policies regarding the body search of students. 2. Units and councils encourage their local school districts to adopt student search policies expressly forbidding strip searches.

PUPILS WITH SUPPORT SERVICE NEEDS – 2014 (R-'07, R-'00, R-'93, U-'86)

1. Encourage Boards of Education to identify at-risk children and youth and provide needed services as already required by Commissioner's Regulations (CR). 2. Strongly support collaborative efforts with non-school agencies to provide services.

INTERNET SAFETY – 2013 (U-'06)

1. Inform and educate parents, students, educators, school staff and communities on the dangers associated with Internet, wireless and other electronic communication. 2. Heighten parents' technologic awareness and skills and encourage the use of internet safety strategies to ensure the safety of children and youth, and to encourage responsible and ethical use of Internet resources. 3. Work with collaborating partners and others to advocate for the protection of children and youth in a cyber world. 4. Work to ensure that appropriate laws, policies and regulations are in place to protect children and youth when using the Internet, wireless and other electronic communications.

JUVENILE OFFENDERS - PREVENTION, INTERVENTION AND FOLLOW-UP – 2013 (R-'06, R-'99)

1. Seek and support legislation to increase funding for prevention and intervention programs for high-risk youth, i.e. mentoring programs, after school activities, drug abuse counseling, etc. 2. Seek and support legislation to increase treatment programs for juveniles accused of serious offenses, i.e. mental health, sex offense and drug treatment programs. 3. Seek and support legislation to create aftercare programs for juvenile offenders once they return to their neighborhoods and communities.

TRANSFERRING OF RECORDS – 2013 (R-'06, R-'99, R-'92)

1. Urge the New York State Education Department to inform school personnel across the state of the concern for the lack of expeditious transfer of school records; and strongly encourage the New York State Education Department to develop appropriate policies and guidelines that insure the timely transfer of records. 2. Encourage its units and councils to alert and educate parents and members as to this proposed policy and its compliance within their own districts.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – 2013 (R-'06, R-'99, R-'92)

1. Support legislation for public and private agencies within communities to establish or maintain temporary, alternate housing and shelters for victims of domestic violence. 2. Urge that psychological and counseling services be made available for all family members in disrupted households in such a way that the safety of the victims is not jeopardized. 3. Continue to promote and support legislation that would ensure sufficient funding for services to victims of domestic violence in NYS.

SUICIDE PREVENTION – 2013 (U-'06, R-'99, R-'92, R-'85)

1. Support legislation that provides funding for suicide prevention and intervention programs for students in grades K-12. 2. School districts be encouraged to provide in-service training on the problem of teenage suicide for teachers and support staff. 3. Encourage its units and councils to offer programs to educate parents about youth suicide. 4. Support the development of services for survivors of suicide attempt(s) and for families who have lost someone to suicide.

TEACHING OUR CHILDREN PERSONAL SAFETY – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98, R-'91)

1. Encourage each unit and council to promote educational programs (for parents, children and youth) based on the currently mandated Health and Safety Environment Standards (#2) of the NYS Education Department with emphasis upon personal safety techniques.

SAFEGUARDING EXPLOITED AND MISSING CHILDREN – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98, R-'91, R-'84)

1. Urge school districts to develop procedures for the registration of new students that would include a special check on individual students whose records are missing, incomplete or suspicious to verify their validity. 2. Seek and support legislation that will toughen the laws and enforce more stringent punishment for perpetrators of serious and repeated sexual abuse crimes and murders of children.

FINGERPRINTING CHILDREN – 2011 (R-'04, R-'97, R-'90, R-'83)

1. In areas where fingerprinting programs are to be implemented, urge the local units and councils to adopt the following guidelines: (1) Seek advice and cooperation from police departments so that fingerprints are taken properly. (2) Program should be arranged for other than school hours (evenings or Saturday) so that there is no possibility of fingerprinting a child without a parent's or guardian's permission. (3) A parent or guardian must accompany the child to the fingerprinting program. (4) All sets of fingerprints should be retained by the parent or guardian, thus avoiding conflicts over lost fingerprints or any question of improper use of fingerprints. (5) The cost of the program, if possible, should be defrayed by nominal fees. (6) Parent or guardian should be advised of how best to retain fingerprint records.

LIMITING CHILD LABOR – 2011 (U-'04, R-'97, U-'90)

1. Urge councils and high school units to inform parents of the existing child labor laws and the effects of inappropriate work experience on the education, social development, safety and health of our children.

MISSING CHILDREN – 2011 (U-'04, R-'97, R-'90, R-'83)

1. Inform PTA members of the provisions of legislation regarding missing and exploited children, such as the Missing Children's Assistance Act and Amber Alert.

IX Libraries, Media, Technology

FEDERAL COMMUNICATION COMMISSION (FCC) - EDUCATION REGARDING RADIO BROADCASTING – 2017 (R-'10, R-'03, R-'96)

1. Encourage the radio broadcast industry to comply with the letter and spirit of the FCC "safe harbor" provisions for children. 2. Encourage the radio broadcast industry, and particularly those stations that appeal to children, to broadcast language and material that is suitable for children. 3. Urge units and councils to educate parents about the need to monitor their children's radio listening and about the FCC "safe harbor" provisions and procedures for filing complaints.

UP-TO-DATE AND UNBIASED EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL – 2016 (R-'09)

1. Support ongoing challenges to the decisions of cases that limit the content of school books. 2. Communicate with school textbook publishers to make them aware of the continuing need for textbooks that offer an overview of opinion and factual information. 3. Encourage school boards and school board associations to unite in their determination to purchase educational materials which contain up-to-date information and present facts in an unbiased manner. 4. Every NYS school district ensures that all instructional materials and textbooks to be used in schools are available in useable alternative formats for all students (Chapter 377 Education Law 2001).

TV/VIDEO VIEWING IN SCHOOLS – 2016 (R-'09, U-'02, R-'95)

1. Encourage the Board of Regents to adopt a regulation that would require every school district to have a policy for the use of movies, videos (DVD, Blu-Ray, etc.), television and the Internet in all classrooms. 2. This policy be formulated with parental involvement.

CHALLENGES TO TEXTBOOK AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL REVIEW – 2013 (R-'06, R-'99, R-'92, R-'85)

1. Encourage its units/councils to work with their respective school districts to implement the procedures for selection of textbooks and educational materials. 2. Urge all units/councils to work specifically to support adherence to the provision requiring that no challenged material be removed pending a decision arrived at through due process by an approved review committee.

TV AND INTERNET CONTROL DEVICES – 2012 (R-'05, U-'98, R-'91, R-'84)

1. Urge PTA units to educate their members as to the availability of parent control devices for both TV and the Internet.

X Parent and Family Life

CHILD CARE SERVICES – 2017 (R-'10, U-'03, R-'96, R-'89, R-'82)

1. Encourage units and councils to have programs addressing the need for child care, including school age child care, in their communities and to share guidelines on quality child care with parents. 2. Urge the state legislature to address the need to encourage home child care providers to register and to provide training programs for all child care providers to order to reduce turnover and improve quality of care. 3. Encourage the state legislature to address the different needs of families for accessible child care by providing incentives for more infant slots, increased salaries for child care workers, and further incentives for business and other organizations to start quality programs.

ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY PREVENTION – 2014 (U-'07, R-'00, R-'93, U-'86)

1. The NYS PTA and its local units focus on the prevention of unintended adolescent pregnancy, recognizing the need for involving parents or persons in parental relationship and uniting their efforts with school and community resources. 2. Support implementation of health/family-life curricula in every school, emphasizing the importance of the participation of parents or persons in parental relationship to the student. 3. Highlight and publish information about evidence-based health and family life programs that achieve good results. 4. Support funding for school-based health clinics which will provide comprehensive health care and counseling to adolescents and whatever pregnancy prevention services deemed appropriate by the local community.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN POVERTY – 2014 (R-'07, R-'00, R-'93, R-'86)

1. Cooperate with agencies and organizations which advocate for children and youth in poverty. 2. Support local, state, and federal legislation to alleviate isolation of the socioeconomically disadvantaged through specific programs such as more available day care, flexible work hours for quality parenting, and other beneficial actions.

XI Pre-School and Early Childhood Education

STRENGTHENING THE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM – 2013 (R-'06, U-'99, R-'92, R-'85)

1. Encourage its units and councils to urge school districts to strengthen the kindergarten program with full day and developmentally appropriate programs taught by highly qualified teachers. 2. Encourage the New York State Education Department to disseminate information by which school districts with full day kindergartens may evaluate their program. 3. Encourage the New York State Education Department to engage in research to determine the effectiveness of full day kindergarten programs. 4. Advocate for full funding for full day kindergarten programs, staffing and facilities.

BAN OF STANDARDIZED TESTING OF YOUNG CHILDREN – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98, R-'91)

1. Urge local school districts to stop the mass use of standardized tests from pre-school through second grade (with the exception of mandated bilingual and certain special education assessments). 2. Urge local school districts to develop and replace standardized tests below the third grade with alternative assessment methods that go by various names (authentic, appropriate, performance-based and direct) and will provide useful data and genuine accountability. 3. Urge that the State Education Department, State Board of Regents, State Legislature, and local school districts NOT call for new or additional standardized tests below the third grade and NOT rely on existing standardized tests below the third grade as indicators of educational progress. 4. Urge councils and local units to provide information to parents about developmentally appropriate alternative means of assessment.

XII PTA Organizational Decisions

VOLUNTEERISM – 2016 (R-'09, R-'02, R-'95, R-'88)

1. Support an amendment to the Internal Revenue Code to allow volunteers the same standard of deduction for their mileage rate as that used by business people in computing their expense deduction.

FUNDRAISING POSITION – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98)

1. Seek to prevent the exploitation of children through PTA fundraising. 2. Children and youth should never sell door-to-door for PTA. 3. Children and youth should never be offered prize incentives for fundraising. 4. Educate units and councils about the dangers involved in fundraising practices which utilize children in the generation of sales and revenue. 5. All PTAs re-examine their fundraising practices as to whether those activities promote PTA's objects and purposes.

XIII Religious Expression In Public Schools

SCHOOL PRAYER AMENDMENT – 2011 (R-'04, R-'97, R-'90, R-'83)

1. NYS PTA opposes a constitutional school prayer amendment.

XIV Safety

CHANGE IN THE VEHICLE TRAFFIC LAW PERTAINING TO STOPPED SCHOOL BUSES – 2017 (R-'10, R-'03, R-'96)

1. Support programs to raise the awareness of dangerous traffic situations at school bus stops. 2. Seek and support legislation to prevent a vehicle from making turns toward a school bus while it is discharging or receiving passengers to change the law to read "any" where it now reads "either" in section 1174(a) Vehicle and Traffic Law. 3. Seek and support legislation to prohibit the establishment of bus stops at intersections or within 100 feet of intersections unless the Board of Education adopts a resolution indicating that an intersection location is unavoidable.

MANDATED FIRE/LOCKDOWN/LOCKOUT DRILLS – 2017 (U-'10, R-'03, U-'96, R-'89)

1. Urge the New York State Education Department to consider amending the requirement of mandated fire drills so that at least one drill occurs annually during non-classroom situations, and before/after school instructions for all building occupants.

MONITORS ON SCHOOL BUSES – 2017 (R-'10, U-'03, R-'96, R-'89, U-'82)

1. Encourage its local units to sponsor campaigns within their school districts to have money allocated in school budgets to pay the expenses incurred for hiring and training monitors. 2. Continue to encourage the State Legislature to consider bus monitors an integral part of transporting children to and from school and, therefore, an “aidable” transportation cost.

SCHOOL BUS STOP VULNERABILITY – 2016 (U-'09, U-'02, U-'01, R-'94)

1. Encourage PTA units and councils to mount a campaign to raise awareness of student vulnerability at school bus stops. 2. Continue to educate parents and students in school bus safety and make parents aware that they are responsible for monitoring and protecting their children until the school bus arrives at the stop and the red lights begin to flash.

PENALTIES FOR PASSING A STOPPED SCHOOL BUS – 2016 (R-'09, R-'02, R-'95, R-'88)

1. Seek stronger enforcement of the existing law that requires all vehicles to stop and not pass a stopped school bus when its red lights are flashing.

ADULT SUPERVISION – 2016 (R-'09, R-'02, R-'95, R-'88)

1. PTA units and councils urge their local school boards to provide adequate adult supervision of children during lunch and recess and that a minimum of one adult be assigned to each area where such activities are taking place.

HORSEBACK RIDING SAFETY – 2016 (R-'09, U-'02, R-'98, R-'91)

1. Support stronger legislation to enact a riding safety code for operators of horseback riding facilities which would include, but not be limited to, the use of protective helmets and safety instruction to reduce the chance of injury.

SCOOTER, SKATEBOARD AND IN-LINE SKATING PROTECTIVE GEAR – 2015 (U-'08, U-'01, R-'95, U-'90)

1. Encourage each unit and council to promote educational programs concerning the need for skateboard and in-line skating protective gear (which includes a helmet, elbow pads, knee pads and wrist guards). 2. Encourage each unit and council to urge physicians, manufacturers and sales personnel to educate and encourage parents, guardians and children in the use of scooter, skateboard and in-line skating protective gear. 3. Encourage its units and councils to advocate for regulations within their communities to control the use of scooter, skateboard and in-line skates on public streets and in areas of busy pedestrian activity and to advocate for specially designed skateboard and in-line skating areas to serve as an alternative to using the street.

GUN POSSESSION BY MINORS – 2015 (R-'08, U-'01, R-'94, U-'87)

1. Urge its units and councils to promote educational programs for increased awareness of current gun possession laws, including those precluding possession of air/spring guns by youth under age sixteen, and emphasizing the effects of misuse of guns.

DISCHARGING OF FIRE ARMS WITHIN SCHOOL AREAS – 2014 (R-'07, R-'00, R-'93, R-'86)

1. Seek and support legislation to amend section 265.35 of the NYS Penal Code to prohibit the discharge of firearms by any person other than exceptions listed in section 265.35 (of the NYS Penal Code) within one-half mile of any school property; urge local communities to enact similar legislation. 2. Urge local cities, towns and villages to enact their own zoning ordinances which will not allow the discharge of firearms within one-half mile of school property.

REVISING NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CHILD SAFETY ZONE POINT SYSTEM – 2013

1. Urge the New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT) to amend the guidelines for child safety zones to allow greater points to be given to roads with more than four lanes. 2. Urge its units and councils to educate schools, parents and children on the dangers of crossing multilane highways.

FIREARMS ACCIDENT PREVENTION LAW – 2013 (U-'06, R-'99, U-'92)

1. Support legislation making parents and/or owners responsible for negligently stored firearms and ammunition. 2. Encourage its units and councils to offer programs to educate the parents and/or owners about their legal responsibility for negligently stored firearms and ammunition.

BICYCLE HELMET LAW – 2013 (R-'06, U-'99, R-'92, U-'89)

1. Seek and support legislation that would require all persons who operate or are passengers on bicycles to wear bicycle helmets, and that existing law for infants under one year of age remain the same.

CHARTER BUS SAFETY – 2013 (R-'06, U-'99, R-'92)

1. Seek and support legislation that requires the Department of Motor Vehicles to retain all bus drivers' accident and moving violation records over a ten year period of time. 2. Seek and support legislation to increase civil penalties against bus companies for non-compliance with intra- and inter-state motor carrier laws. 3. Seek and support legislation that requires seat belts on charter buses. 4. Seek and support legislation that would require the superintendent of schools to obtain the charter bus company's records to approve the services of charter bus drivers and approve only drivers who meet the additional requirement of school bus driver certification, including fingerprinting and background checks. 5. That the law requires the superintendent of schools to obtain a bus driver's inter- and intra-state accident and moving violation records before allowing them to drive buses transporting children. 6. Urge local school districts to obtain bus drivers' inter- and intra-state accident and moving violation records before allowing them to drive buses transporting children.

IDENTIFYING UNSAFE SCHOOL CROSSINGS ON STATE OWNED ROADS – 2012 (R-'05, R-'98)

1. Support the passage of legislation which would enable the Department of Transportation to expend funds on identified risk areas and for the purpose of erecting, maintaining and upkeep of traffic signals on state, county and local roads.

TRAFFIC LIGHT INSTALLATION AT SCHOOLS WHICH ARE LOCATED ON STATE OWNED ROADS – 2011 (R-'04, U-'97, R-'90)

1. Support the passage of legislation that would enable the Dept. of Transportation (DOT) to expend funds for the installation and maintenance of traffic lights at schools which are located on state owned roads.

SEAT BELT USAGE ON SCHOOL BUSES – 2011 (R-'04, R-'97, R-'90, R-'83)

1. Encourage its units and councils to support the use of seat belts on all school buses.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER 911 – 2011 (R-'04, R-'97, R-'90, R-'83)

1. Urge its units, councils and districts to disseminate information to its members available from local police authorities regarding the emergency telephone number 911, both its proper use and precautions about misuse.

SAFETY ITEMS ON SCHOOL BUSES – 2011 (U-'04, R-'97, R-'90, R-'83)

1. Urge school districts to purchase and/or contract for school buses with optional safety equipment such as video cameras, two-way radios, and external strobe lights.

YOUTH CAMP SAFETY – 2011 (R-'04, R-'97, R-'90, R-'83)

1. Support the passage of a federal youth camp safety act.

XV NYS PTA Position Papers

**PTA *POSITION PAPERS* REPRESENT THE RESEARCH OF THE
NEW YORK STATE PTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AND PROVIDE GUIDELINES ON ISSUES.
THEY ARE REVIEWED EVERY SEVEN YEARS.**

Position Paper

OPIATE/OPIOID PREVENTION, INTERVENTION AND TREATMENT

The opiate/opioid epidemic has impacted everyone across the country regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. This is an equal opportunity epidemic where no one is immune. Yet, there is still a negative public perception about those individuals and their families who struggle with substance use disorders. The myth that it is a will power issue or “they deserve what they get” fuels the stigma that often inhibits individuals and families from reaching out and asking for help. PTAs are in a unique position to advocate for policy change, funding for treatment/prevention services, and support for those in need of assistance.

Key Facts from National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

- “Roughly 21 to 29 percent of patients prescribed opioids for chronic pain misuse them.
- Between 8 and 12 percent develop an opioid use disorder.
- An estimated 4 to 6 percent who misuse prescription opioids transition to heroin.
- About 80 percent of people who use heroin first misused prescription opioids.
- Opioid overdoses increased 30 percent from July 2016 through September 2017 in 52 areas in 45 states.
- The Midwestern Region saw opioid overdoses increased 70 percent from July 2016 through September 2017.
- Opioid overdoses in large cities increased by 54 percent in 16 states.”
- “Synthetic opioids (primarily fentanyl) passed prescription opioids as the most common drugs involved in overdose deaths. In 2016, synthetic opioids were involved in nearly 50% of opioid related deaths, up from 14%.”

Recommendations for NYS PTA

There are a number of actions and programs NYS PTAs can undertake to help prevent and combat prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse.

- **Advocate for funding of evidence-based prevention, screening and early intervention services:** Evidence-based means that the initiative has been researched and proven to be effective. The National Registry on Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP) provides a listing of evidence-based and emerging practices that can be implemented in a variety of communities and settings.
- **Secure, monitor and dispose of medications:** Adults need to secure medications in a safe location. It is important to monitor and track medications. PTAs should work along with local law enforcement to promote and coordinate safe disposal of medication initiatives.
- **Advocate for and promote drug take-back programs:** These programs promote opportunities to get unwanted or unused drugs out of the medicine cabinet to be properly disposed of. These can be community wide events or to have ongoing locations where drugs can be disposed of properly year round.
- **Advocate for training of all health care prescribers on medication pain management and risks of physical dependency:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) created guidelines for prescribing opioids for chronic pain. This includes training of providers.
- **Advocate for interstate prescription monitoring program:** Prescription monitoring programs have been established in most, but not all states, to collect, maintain and monitor prescriptions. This has been shown to reduce the numbers of people “doctor shopping” for prescriptions.
- **Advocate for streamlining access to appropriate level of care services including medication assisted services:** There isn’t a one-size-fits-all approach for substance use disorder treatment. Each person needs to be assessed individually based on their needs and experiences.
- **Advocate for multiple pathways for recovery including the use of peer mentors and recovery coaches:** There has been ongoing research on the strength-based approach of people in recovery to providing support for individuals and families accessing care.
- **Advocate for access to the overdose reversal medication Naloxone:** The US Surgeon General “released a public health advisory to urge more Americans to carry a potentially life saving medication that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.”
- **Become a member of local substance use prevention coalitions:** Coalitions are a proven prevention strategy designed to change the environmental culture of a community. PTAs represent not only parents, but community, and are vital key stakeholders in making a coalition effective.
- **Eliminate stigma:** Substance use disorders can impact anyone regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Stigma prevents people from seeking and limits access to services they desperately need.

PTAs can lead the way in changing and eliminating the stigmatizing language often associated with people struggling with substance use disorders. PTAs can partner with organizations whose focus is to destigmatize the disease with new messaging and supporting a national recovery movement.

- **Share stories of long term recovery:** PTAs have a powerful voice and the means to educate its members and the community. Changing the story from one of disaster to one of hope shows that people with substance use disorders can heal. PTAs should exercise caution to properly vet any organization or provider they partner with, assuring they are licensed and/or funded by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS).

Adopted 7/18

Position Paper: PRESCRIPTION AND OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUG USE

Prescription drugs are licensed medicines regulated by laws and require a physician's prescription for a person to obtain them. These medications are safe if taken as prescribed by the person for whom they are intended. Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are available without prescriptions and like prescription drugs; they are safe when used according to package directions or a medical professional's recommendations. Some OTC medications have active ingredients with the potential for misuse at higher-than-recommended dosages. Another misuse of OTC medications is mixing them together to create new products. The availability of over-the-counter and prescription medications in the medicine cabinets at home makes it easier for young people to have access to these drugs. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) suggest locking up all prescription medication in the home to help avoid access to children and teens.

Teenagers are particularly vulnerable to abusing these drugs because they do not perceive over the counter or prescription drugs as having negative consequences nor do they think they will get into trouble for using them because they are legal. Teens use these drugs because they relieve pain, reduce anxiety, help them sleep, give them pleasure, enhance sociability, help them lose weight and give them the perception of doing better in school and sports

Pharming is something young people have engaged in by taking handfuls of drugs (prescription and over-the-counter) and ingesting them. This is often done at parties and dangerously often with alcohol. Over-the-counter cold medicines, particularly with dextromethorphan (DXM) can also be abused. These are often inexpensive and easy to access. Other over-the-counter medicines that have been misused include motion sickness pills and sleep aids. Misuse of these drugs can lead to liver damage and central nervous system issues including breathing and irregular heartbeat.

“Effective August 2013, NYS Public Health Law requires most prescribers of controlled substances consult New York’s online Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) Registry. The same law allows pharmacists to consult (not require) the registry.

Veterinarians are exempt from the requirement to consult the PMP Registry. However, veterinarians and other dispensing practitioners are required to report controlled substance dispensing activity to the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement (BNE) within 24 hours.”¹ The purpose of this law is to give access to prescribers and pharmacists the ability to view patient’s history of controlled substance prescribing and dispensing.

Key Facts

- From 2014 -2016, 27,779,628 prescriptions were written and tracked through the NYS Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) (NYS Department of Health)
- In 2017, 14.0% of students in the United States had ever misused prescription opioids. (The 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System)
- 1.5 million American kids have reported they have misused prescription or over-the-counter drugs. (NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services)
- In 2016, an estimated 6.2 million Americans aged 12 or older misused psychotherapeutic drugs at least once in the past month, which represent 2.3 percent of the population aged 12 or older. Of the four categories of prescription drugs that are presented in this report, prescription pain relievers were the most commonly misused by people aged 12 or older. The 6.2 million people aged 12 or older who misused prescription psychotherapeutic drugs in the past month included 3.3 million who misused prescription pain relievers in that period. Approximately 2.0 million people aged 12 or older misused prescription tranquilizers in the past month. An estimated 1.7 million people aged 12 or older misused prescription stimulants, and 497,000 (0.5 million) misused prescription sedatives in the past month. (2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health)
- More than 64,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2016, including illicit drugs and prescription opioids. That number is nearly double in only one decade. (CDC)

Recommendations for PTA

There are a number of actions and programs PTAs can undertake to help prevent and combat prescription and over-the counter drug abuse.

¹ https://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/narcotic/prescription_monitoring/

- Educate members: PTAs can provide ongoing up-to-date information about use and abuse of medications including health concerns, dangers, risk factors, and current trends. Parents should be encouraged to utilize resources such as community education programs from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services and obtain appropriate free resources from the National Institute on Drug Abuse.
- Safeguard medications: Parents need to be aware of what medications are in their home. Ask family members and friends to also keep track and lock up their medications. They need to monitor both the amounts of medications consumed and who is taking these medications. PTAs need to encourage members to keep track of any medications in their home and provide practical resources parents can use.
- Medication disposal initiatives: PTAs need to work along with local law enforcement to promote and coordinate safe disposal of medications. The federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) oversees national drug take back initiatives.
- Coordinate efforts with educators/health providers/pharmacies: PTA units can work with local educators, health care providers, and pharmacies to promote honest communication about the health and safety issues related to prescription and over the counter drug abuse.
- Work with legislators: PTAs can provide a parent perspective to legislators regarding physicians over prescribing medications and pharmacists identifying people who go from pharmacy to pharmacy (pharmacy shop) to fill multiple prescriptions filled for purposes of misuse and selling drugs.

Summary

Over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse has become an epidemic. Teens are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of this abuse. Some of these drugs may even become addictive, especially when used in a manner inconsistent to their labeling or by taken in a manner or dosage other than prescribed. PTAs need to be proactive with education and advocacy as a means of stopping this out of control problem.

Adopted 7/18



Position Paper:
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TRAINING AND EVALUATION FOR
TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Background

Family Engagement is a full, equal and equitable partnership among families, educators and community partners to promote children’s learning and development from birth through college and career.

In 2017, The New York State Board of Regents adopted the Next Generation Learning Standards, which are designed to standardize curricula and improve student achievement. The Board of Regents has also approved revisions to the teacher Professional Development Standards that incorporate elements of family engagement and require ongoing training for both teachers and administrators.

Education Law 3012-c requires a performance evaluation system for instructional staff and administrators for school districts and BOCES known as Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). This evaluation system is designed to measure teacher and principal effectiveness in the areas of pupil achievement, educational effectiveness in meeting the NYS teacher or administrator standards, and evidence of family engagement.

Research demonstrates that family engagement in a child’s education improves student achievement and performance, improves attendance, reduces drop-out rates, and improves the emotional and physical well-being of children. These are indicators of school, district, and community effectiveness. Research conducted by Dr. Heather Weiss and the Harvard Family Research Project supports this principle, suggesting that families play a significant role in supporting their child’s learning by advocating for high-quality education and successfully guiding them through a complex school system. Dr. Weiss has developed a definition of effective family engagement that has been adopted by the Family, School and Community National Working Group:

“First, family engagement is a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in meaningful ways and in which families are committed to actively supporting their children’s learning and development.

Second, family engagement is continuous across a child’s life and entails enduring commitment but changing parent roles as children mature into young adulthood.

Third, effective family engagement cuts across and reinforces learning in the multiple settings where children learn at home, in pre-kindergarten programs, in school, in after-school programs, in faith-based institutions, and the community.”

National PTA has stated: “Family engagement in education is a critical strategy for ensuring students’ academic achievement, graduation from high school and overall success in life.” With this in mind, promoting the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships is a top priority for both National and New York State PTA. The National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships provide a framework for strengthening family engagement programs, activities and policies. The National PTA Standards shift the focus from what schools should do to involve families to what families, schools and communities can do together to support student achievement.

The National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships are:

- Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community
- Standard 2: Communicating effectively
- Standard 3: Supporting student success
- Standard 4: Speaking up for every child
- Standard 5: Sharing power
- Standard 6: Collaborating with community

At the federal level, the Family Engagement in Education Act of 2015 (H.R. 1194) provides incentives for schools and districts to engage families to close the achievement gap. Specifically, this legislation is designed to empower communities by increasing Title I funding dedicated to family engagement. It proposes requiring local education agencies to develop and implement standards-based policies and practices for school-family partnerships, create Family Engagement Centers, improve professional development, build national-level capacity, and improve existing laws and funding regarding family engagement.

The NYS PTA affirms and supports the National PTA position.

The Role of NYS PTA

We are at a critical juncture in public education with strong momentum at both state and national levels to increase student achievement and teacher/principal accountability at a time when fiscal support has diminished. Given this reality, NYS PTA strongly supports meaningful, culturally competent family engagement in the process of improving student achievement and success.

Specifically, we must influence the New York State Board of Regents to adopt National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships. NYS PTA, therefore, urges teacher preparation programs to include instruction in meaningful, culturally competent family engagement, particularly the concept of ongoing, two-way school/family communication. NYS PTA also supports family engagement training as a component of ongoing professional development for all teachers and administrators. Regarding APPR, NYS PTA advocates that any future revisions include an evaluative component related to family engagement for all non-tenured and tenured teachers and administrators. Lastly, NYS PTA encourages the New York State Legislature to provide adequate funding for the development and implementation of the revised APPR processes and ongoing professional development.

For more information about the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships and National and NYS PTA programs that promote family-school partnerships, visit www.pta.org or www.nyspta.org. For more information regarding APPR, visit www.nysed.gov or www.nysut.org.

Adopted 7/11
Updated 7/18



Position Paper: FINANCIAL LITERACY

BACKGROUND

The lack of financial literacy can contribute to a lower standard of living in general for many Americans and can result in poor saving, poor spending, reduced job opportunities, excessive credit card use, mortgage default, bankruptcy filing and poor investment decisions. Financial stress can impact relationships, physical and mental health, and could lead to criminal behavior. The past economic crisis and the increasing complexity of our financial system make it clear that strengthening the financial knowledge and skills of our young people is critical to the future success and financial stability of our country. Just like reading and writing, financial education impacts the well-being of every student, as well as the economic and social fabric of our communities.

THE NEED/CONSEQUENCES

The lack of financial literacy crosses all economic boundaries from low-income to high-income families. While perceived as a problem of the poor, even well-educated, high-income adults may not know how to properly budget or manage their money and investments well. The buying power of young adults is astronomical, estimated at \$211 billion annually for young people between the ages of 8 and 24 years. With the increased availability of online shopping, gambling and gaming, electronic payments, aggressive credit card solicitation, and email and phishing scams, our children have become a captive audience and easy victims. Therefore, it is important to increase the financial knowledge and capability of all our students. Students need to learn about earning and spending, saving and investing, making wise credit choices, paying for college, and recognizing and avoiding financial fraud.

WHAT WE NEED TO DO

PTA must advocate for effective financial literacy laws and for age-appropriate financial literacy education in our schools. Financial literacy is a complex subject that requires sufficient education. PTA should work to increase financial awareness and self-reliance in the school and community, by providing programs for students and their families at all age levels. Parents must also set appropriate examples through proper budget planning, smart spending, financial goal setting, saving and investment.

Currently, the only required curriculum related to financial literacy is offered in a half year course in economics at the high school level. Some groups (see the NYS PTA website) have proposed national standards. PTA must encourage the NYS Department of Education to set guidelines for P-16 financial literacy education. Local school districts must expand the scope of the existing P-16 curriculum, and develop materials, guidelines and staff training to implement age-appropriate programs of instruction on personal financial literacy. Financial education should include an understanding and the appropriate skills relating to the roles of money, credit, budgeting, financial planning and other relevant personal finance management topics.

PTA should forge partnerships with schools and local community organizations, such as banks and credit unions, to offer financial literacy programs for all age levels. Many of these organizations have curriculums already in place and will partner with schools to offer free programs. PTAs can tie financial literacy to core critical thinking skills and Internet Safety programs that can warn about phishing schemes, easy credit or “too good to be true” offers. PTA can also offer programs that can help parents work with their children to learn the necessary skills. There are many online resources available that describe financial literacy standards, needs and programs. See the NYS PTA website for a list of program ideas.

Topics for PTA awareness programs could include:

- How to use childhood allowances
- Part-time jobs
- Savings and investment
- School banking
- Car loans and credit based purchases
- Cost of and how to pay for insurance, college and other major life expenses
- Financial goal setting and money management skills for life after school
- What is bankruptcy?

Adopted 7/10
Amended 11/17



Position Paper: PARTNERS FOR HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Childhood obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century. The CDC reports that obesity among children aged 6 to 11 has more than doubled in the past 20 years and that the rate among adolescents aged 12 to 19 has more than tripled. New York State is experiencing an epidemic of childhood obesity with one in four children either overweight or obese. These children have higher rates of obesity-related diseases, like diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease; require more frequent and expensive medical care; and are likely to stay obese into adulthood. Yet obesity and related diseases remain largely preventable.

The fundamental causes of childhood obesity are a trend towards increased intake of energy-dense foods that are high in fat and sugars, but low in vitamins, minerals and other healthy micronutrients, and a trend towards decreased levels of physical activity. Conversely, healthy diets and adequate physical activity* are key to the promotion and maintenance of good health throughout one's lifetime, and as such, must be a high public health priority for parents, educators, and policy and law makers.

Establishing healthy behaviors among young people has proven more effective, and often easier, than efforts to change unhealthy behaviors already established among adults. At present, only 18 percent of American adults follow all three of the most important cardiovascular disease prevention measures: not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, and exercising regularly. In 2006, the United States spent more than any nation in the world on health care, and improving the health of its citizens would yield considerable economic benefit to our nation. It is easier and less costly to keep children healthy than to fix preventable health problems later in life.

Parents play an important role in a child's life as nurturers, teachers and role models. They control most food choices at home and their support encourages their children to be more physically active. Furthermore, when parents themselves model a healthy lifestyle, their children are more likely to perceive it as the norm for their own development.

As learning environments where children spend at least one-third of their day, schools also play a very important role in modeling healthy behaviors. Research shows that well-designed, well-implemented school programs can effectively promote students' physical activity and healthy eating. It has been found that, when given the option, students will buy and consume healthful foods and beverages, thus setting the stage for a lifetime of healthy nutritional habits. *In addition to the personal health advantages for students, schools that provide access to good nutrition and opportunities for physical activity benefit through improved academic performance, school attendance and student mood.* (Role of Schools in Reducing Obesity, www.nasbe.org)

In supporting parents' efforts to ensure their children's health, school policies and programs should foster the adoption of healthy diets and physical activities through changes in environment, behaviors and instruction. Aside from healthy school foods, schools should provide students with daily physical education and access to safe, appropriate facilities and equipment. Recognizing that schools play an integral part in child development, in 2004 the federal government passed a law requiring local school wellness policies, with implementation effective as of 2006. An effective school wellness policy is a working document, developed and implemented by school personnel, food service providers, students and parents. It should be reviewed and assessed annually, and by including all stakeholders, creates a critical partnership for the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

As *Partners for Healthy Lifestyles*, home, school and community should work to ensure that:

- School health programs create conditions that are conducive to health and help students develop the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions and practice healthy behaviors.
- The school food services environment (school cafeteria, à la cart foods, snack bars, vending machines) provides foods and beverages that are high in vitamins, minerals and other healthy micronutrients and low in fat, sugar, cholesterol, sodium and calories; follow science-based nutritional standards for school foods and beverages; and comply with national dietary guidelines for school-aged children. NYSPTA advocates the passage of legislation with the following key components:
 - age-appropriate science-based standards that are periodically reviewed by health experts;
 - sufficient time to eat breakfast and lunch;
 - food or beverage never used as incentives or rewards;

- additional funding for school meal programs and expansion of the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, as per NYS Council on Food Policy recommendations that school meal programs serve more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products;
 - a recess period for all elementary school children; no withholding of recess as means of discipline;
 - establishment and implementation of nutrition and physical education competencies and strict standards of accountability;
 - adequate funding so that all school districts can offer healthy foods and beverages.
- Healthy fundraisers are encouraged by school wellness policies and school/community activities.
 - Physical education and/or sports classes are provided and maintained for all students, grades K-12, according to NYS Education Department regulations:
 - All pupils in grades K-3 shall attend and participate in physical education on a daily basis for 120 minutes per week. Students attending half-day kindergarten should meet half the requirement.
 - All pupils in grades 4-6 shall attend and participate in physical education not less than three times per week for 120 minutes per week.
 - All pupils in grades 7-12 shall attend and participate in physical education for not less than three times per week in one semester, and not less than two times per week in the other semester 90 minutes per week.
 - A variety of physical education classes is offered to accommodate each student's age, gender, interests and needs. They should be enjoyable and developmentally appropriate and promote fair play and maximum participation of all students. With such physical activity, students develop the confidence and skills for lifelong physical fitness.
 - The undertaking or withholding of physical activity is not used as punishment.
 - Recess is a regularly scheduled period within the elementary school day that allows for unstructured physical activity, play, and social and cognitive development. Recently many school districts have eliminated recess due to safety concerns and the need for increased time for academic instruction ("No Child Left Behind" constraints).
 - Safety programs – like Safe Routes to School – are developed through the collaborative efforts of local PTA councils and units, community groups, municipalities, transportation services and traffic planners in order to create safe areas for cycling and walking; to advocate for policies promoting safe walking and cycling to and from school and community recreational facilities; and to create public awareness campaigns about student walking/cycling activity.
 - Communities offer a variety of extracurricular activities that enhance student participation and increase opportunities for cooperation among schools, students, parents and community organizations. Parents, educators and community members who participate in physical activities with children model good behavior and can build positive adult-child relationships.

Children will acquire healthy habits by consuming a diet of nutritional foods, increasing physical activity, and limiting the amount of time spent in sedentary activities like watching TV or playing video games. Yet to develop such habits, children must hear consistent messages from home and school. Effecting changes in children's dietary habits and patterns of physical activity will therefore require the combined efforts of many stakeholders, public and private. As partners in advocacy, parents, educators, and community members must teach and model the habits and behaviors of healthy living and must advocate to law and policy makers at all levels for the adoption and funding of policies and programs to promote healthy lifestyles. Our goal must be that our children will live what they learn: to become healthy, active citizens.

- * According to U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Physical Activity Guidelines, children and adolescents should engage in at least 60 minutes daily of moderate and/or vigorous physical activity (aerobic, muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening activities).

Adopted 02/10
Amended 11/17



Position Paper: AFFIRMING LGBTQ YOUTH AND FAMILIES

BACKGROUND

NYS PTA is committed to increasing diversity, ensuring a safe, inclusive school and community environment that provides access to age-appropriate, educationally sound resources and curricula that affirms Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning/Queer (LGBTQ) identities and supports the social, emotional and academic needs of LGBTQ children, youth and families.

All children and youth should be able to attend school and live in communities that are safe and inclusive; free from bullying, discrimination, harassment and intimidation.

Unfortunately, the lack of awareness and understanding of issues facing LGBTQ children, youth and families has contributed to a higher rate of bullying, isolation, depression and suicidal thoughts or attempts at a rate four times higher than their non-LGBTQ peers.

Exclusion and lack of support create environments that are not affirming or safe, and can have negative impacts on LGBTQ youth, including: lower grade point averages, decreased school attendance, increased dropout rates, increased victimization, increased rates of drug, alcohol and tobacco use and abuse, poor self-esteem that can impede social emotional development, and deterrence from higher education or career goals.

Age-appropriate and educationally sound curricula, and current and relevant resources regarding LGBTQ issues increases understanding and cultivates acceptance of and respect for LGBTQ children, youth and families. When coupled with anti-harassment and anti-bullying policies that specifically protect sexual orientation and/or gender identity and gender expression, students experience lower levels of bullying, decreased incidents of harassment, increased teacher/staff intervention, and a greater reporting of incidents.

POSITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

NYS PTA supports state and federal legislation and regulation that:

- specifically recognizes LGBTQ as a protected group; addressing discrimination based upon sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression; and
- creates a safe, supportive and accepting environment in schools; specifying periodic training for educators and other school related professionals in support of all students to increase sensitivity to LGBTQ students and their families.

NYS PTA supports:

- standards regarding age-appropriate, medically accurate, and culturally sensitive information on LGBTQ issues into existing health and other appropriate curricula; and
- local adoption of age-appropriate, educationally sound curricula and resources that affirms sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression within a safe and inclusive environment for all students; and
- access to age-appropriate library and media resources that increases LGBTQ inclusion.

NYS PTA encourages all units and councils, working in conjunction with school educators, school related professionals, administrators, and community members:

- to raise awareness of age-appropriate and educationally sound LGBTQ affirming resources and support among students, families, school employees and community members;
- to ensure necessary revisions and amendments to policy and curricula that specifically address the topics of sexual orientation and gender identification or expression as they relate to ensuring a safe and inclusive school environment for all students, free from harassment, intimidation and bullying; and
- to further policies and practices that are inclusive of LGBTQ students and families, and ensure that schools provide access to LGBTQ-affirming resources.

Examples of policies to review and amended as necessary include, but are not limited to: bullying and harassment policies, professional development and training related to LGBTQ issues and inclusiveness, curricula decisions and implementation (especially health curricula), school function and extra-curricular policies, allowance of school-sponsored LGBTQ clubs and activities, access to inclusive K-12 literature, inclusion of LGBTQ heritage events, and further policies and practices that are inclusive of LGBTQ students and families, and ensure that schools provide access to LGBTQ-affirming resources.

CONCLUSION

Every child is entitled to a healthy, safe, supportive and inclusive educational setting. Unfortunately, LGBTQ students can experience hostile, non-inclusive or unsupportive school environments. NYS PTA has a strong commitment to increasing diversity and inclusion in the educational system and our communities so all children and youth are appropriately supported.

We must work together, as an educational community, to support our LGBTQ students to ensure they are well prepared for the many challenges that may lie ahead.

Adopted 11/17



Position Paper: ASSESSMENT, TESTING AND LEARNING

NYS PTA POSITIONS

All Educators must:

- establish balanced use of assessments to inform instruction without over testing or overemphasizing test performance
- create and use high quality assessments to measure what is important in a meaningful manner that meets the standards with validity, reliability, fairness and developmental appropriateness – especially for students with disabilities or new English learners
- maintain a positive environment for students during assessment/test administration
- minimize the use of testing and test preparation so to maximize the learning environment and support whole child learning
- avoid the use of a single test or single assessment measure for the placement, promotion, or retention of a student, or within high stakes decisions affecting students
- establish developmentally appropriate seat time when assessing students
- use assessment as part of a holistic improvement of learning and strategic planning for the individual student, groups of students and school systems, rather than using assessment results for punishment or competition
- never use standardized multiple-choice tests and school readiness tests with preschool and early elementary children for any purpose

Boards of Education must:

- examine assessment data to inform and support improved instruction, such as curriculum design, improved instructional materials and professional development, and assistance to students when gaps are identified
- annually review all assessment data with parents and the general public to engage in a dialogue when establishing priorities for programs, staffing, budgeting and strategic planning

Principals and Teachers must:

- score assessments and present student data in a timely, easy to understand manner to parents and students, where possible
- provide mutually convenient opportunities for parents and students to review assessment data for the purposes of establishing individual learning goals, describing measures of expected learning and providing support for learning outside the school day

BACKGROUND

Assessment is an essential aspect of the learning process since it provides feedback intended to show the level at which instruction should begin, the effectiveness of ongoing learning strategies, and the level of proficiency attained as a result of the instructional process. It is intended to benefit the student, to inform teachers who guide each student's progress and to assist parents in understanding how to support their child's learning. There are many types of assessment, with what we know as tests representing a relatively small subset of the numerous assessment tools available.

Types of Assessment

Benchmark – is the initial measurement of knowledge or skill. Subsequent measures show student growth and skill acquisition over a period of time.

Formative – also called diagnostic, are relatively short assessments intended to provide teachers with very quick feedback that can shape day to day instruction. Formative assessment may be as simple as a answering a question within or at the end of class, or be a short quiz or demonstration.

Summative – often found in the form of final exams or achievement tests, measure what a student knows at the completion of some period of instruction. Regents exams and annual portfolios, and certification exams provide a summation of learning for the year or program period.

Performance – beyond measuring what a student knows, these assessments demonstrate what a student can do with that knowledge. Not typically multiple choice or “bubble tests,” performance assessments require multiple steps to

complete a task, often based on higher level thinking questions. Students are asked to show their work and are typically given credit for the process they use, along with arriving at the “correct” answer.

Portfolio – draws conclusions of student performance based on samples of student work over a period of time, for example reading /writing logs. While this form of assessment may provide the best evidence of what a student knows and can do, it requires clearly defined rubrics or benchmarks of performance.

Adaptive – is a relatively new form of assessment usually completed on a computerized platform. Each test item/question is selected based on the response to previous items. If a student responds correctly to an item, the program selects a more difficult item as the next question. Likewise, if a response is incorrect, a less difficult item is presented. The purpose is to pinpoint a student’s actual achievement level in the least amount of time.

Standardized – while individual teachers construct their own benchmark, formative and summative assessments; standardized tests constructed by multiple people, have undergone a broad review to determine that they fairly and consistently measure what they are intended to measure. Such tests are typically developed by research/testing/publishing companies and reviewed by testing experts (psychometricians) to be administered to large groups. The NYS Regents exams, SAT, ACT, NAEP and PISA are examples of standardized assessments.

Norm -Referenced – uses the score of one test taker compared with or against others who have taken the test. For example, a score of 70 could mean that the student scored *better than 70% of the other people who took the same test*.

Criterion-referenced – measures whether students have mastered specific content without comparison to others who take the test. For example, a score of 70 would typically mean that the student got *70% of the items* correct.

Assessment Standards

Regardless of the assessment intent, tests are most useful in shaping instruction if they are fair, achieve consistent results, measure what they are intended to measure and are free of bias. The following terms are often heard in discussion of tests or assessments.

Validity. Does the assessment measure what it is supposed to measure?

Reliability. If the same assessment were administered multiple times to the same student, would the results be similar or consistent?

Fair or Bias free. Are questions or items meaningful for students of different cultural backgrounds such that items measure achievement rather than the impact of unintended factors, such as race, residence, or family wealth?

Developmental Appropriateness. Do assessment items use language and examples that measure what is intended in language and context familiar to students’ age and educational development? Are the time on task and organization of the test developmentally appropriate for students?

Assessment Data

Assessment results or data may be used to provide entrance to specific programs or assign learning supports for a student, revise instruction or curriculum, highlight professional development for teachers, evaluate teachers and/or compare school effectiveness.

Scaled Score – is determined by the number of points earned on a test so that the test results mean the same thing year after year even though different students are taking the test with different questions.

Cut Score/Proficiency Level – is a performance judgment, typically established for state tests once raw (number correct) scores are known. For example, a “cut” score of 70% correct may be judged as the minimum definition of proficiency in one year where a “cut” score to define proficiency in a subsequent year may be set at 80% correct answers. Cut scores are aligned with levels of proficiency and percentile rank, which is a comparison to all students who have taken this specific test.

Growth Scores – compare a prior assessment score (benchmark) against the current assessment score and other students’ performance. Growth scores may consider additional impacting factors such as poverty or designation as a student with disability or new English learner.

Adopted 7/15



Position Paper: EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD

A Whole Child education recognizes the importance and value of a comprehensive, multifaceted model of teaching and learning that occurs within a safe and supportive learning environment. The Whole Child model addresses and fosters the physical-psychological-social-emotional-intellectual aspects of a child's development, creating a balance that is critical.

New York State PTA supports the ongoing efforts of the New York State Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department to establish and maintain high academic standards that support the whole child. Learning standards, curriculum and instruction that reflect a Whole Child approach will stimulate varied, individualized pathways to learning for all children.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PTA

New York State PTA, its units, councils and regions, will advocate that all children:

- are “healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged” in educational settings that promote “long term development and success.”ⁱⁱ
- have an equal opportunity to develop to their fullest potential with life skills that include: “digital, media, and informational literacy to evaluate content and use technology effectively; life and career competencies such as flexibility, time and project management, and self-direction; cultural awareness; leadership; and responsibility.”ⁱⁱⁱ
- are provided NYS learning standards that incorporate a Whole Child social-emotional approach supporting students as they become college and/or career ready.
- have a school climate that fosters the development of healthy lifestyles through comprehensive programs such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s “Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Health (WSCC)”^{iv} initiative.
- will be educated in schools with policies that strengthen family and community engagement as an integral part of the success of the whole child; “support parent education and family literacy programs in addition to individualized, ongoing, and job-embedded professional development for educators.”^v
- will experience cooperation among family, school, and community in building and supporting protective environments that will nurture resiliency in youth. This should include children being connected to at least one adult in the school building who they feel cares about them and wants them to succeed.
- are engaged in civility, citizenship, tolerance and character education^{vi} that supports the social, emotional and ethical development.

BACKGROUND

According to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the five tenets of The Whole Child are:

- 1) Each student enters school healthy and learns and practices a healthy lifestyle.
- 2) Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe.
- 3) Each student actively engages in his/her own learning and experiences connections to the school and broader community.
- 4) Each student receives personalized learning and support from qualified, caring adults.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/policy-priorities/vol21/num02/A-Lex>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/policy-priorities/vol21/num02/A-Lexicon-for-Educating-the-Whole-Child-%28and-Preparing-the-Whole-Adult%29.aspx>

^{iv} <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wsc/index.htm>

^v <http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/wholechild/snapshot/2014/NY-ASCD-Whole-Child-Snapshot.pdf>

^{vi} <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/>

- 5) Each student experiences academic challenges and prepares for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.^{vii}

In looking at the whole child, we need to change the education conversation from a narrow definition of academic achievement to one that encompasses a much broader vision. Teaching a well-balanced curriculum, based on the Whole Child approach—one that allows for physical activity and socialization; that challenges and inspires learning and motivates everyone in the classroom, students and teacher alike. Whether the subject is art, music, foreign language, field trips, sports, or recess – these ALL contribute to preparing the whole child academically, socially, and emotionally for civic participation and personal growth. In an environment of diminishing fiscal support educators and school systems must continue to value and support varied subject area opportunities.

According to the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research, students need to build social-emotional skills in order to be successful in mastering college and career ready standards. Students who “become frustrated or confused...must learn how to persevere in meeting...new standards. If they do not know how to manage or regulate the emotions they have during school (e.g., joy, jealousy, frustration, relief), their mental resources will not be used for academic learning.”^{viii} Research shows that “when students develop social emotional competencies, they are more motivated to learn and committed to school (as seen through improved attendance and graduation rates), and they are less likely to act out in class, get suspended, or be held back.”^{ix}

“To be prepared for well-paying jobs and lifelong learning, New York’s children need personalized support, safe environments, good health, and challenging learning opportunities.”^x Therefore, in building a whole child educational perspective, schools must collaborate with families and community support groups to provide educational opportunities along with supportive, healthy learning environments before, during and after school.

New York State PTA supports a Whole Child, student-centered educational approach that results in healthy, well-rounded, resilient children. Balancing learning standards with social-emotional programming and family engagement will create a developmentally appropriate way to help children to become knowledgeable, responsible, compassionate adults and citizens of the world.

Adopted 7/15

^{vii} <http://www.wholechildeducation.org/assets/content/mx-resources/WholeChild-MakingTheCase.pdf>

^{viii} <http://www.gtcenter.org/sites/default/files/TeachingtheWholeChild.pdf>

^{ix} <http://www.gtcenter.org/sites/default/files/TeachingtheWholeChild.pdf>

^x <http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/wholechild/snapshot/2014/NY-ASCD-Whole-Child-Snapshot.pdf>



Position Paper: JUVENILE JUSTICE IN NEW YORK STATE

New York is one of only two states in the country that automatically charge all 16 and 17 year olds as adults in the criminal justice system. NYS PTA believes that a juvenile justice system is the appropriate setting for youth to be accused and adjudicated.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PTA:

Advocate and support legislation that reforms the Juvenile Justice System.

- Change New York State law to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 16 to 18 and to provide rehabilitation including behavioral health care and educational/vocational opportunities.
- Ensure juveniles under age 18 are not placed in adult prisons or jails. Further, they should be protected by “Sight and Sound” separation from jailed adults. Housing juveniles with adults is dangerous. Research shows that children who are housed in adult facilities are more likely to commit suicide, be sexually assaulted, be assaulted by staff, and be attacked with a weapon.
- Move the majority of cases to Family Court, and create a new Youth Part for juveniles alleged to have committed more violent crimes. Expand services including alternatives to detention and incarceration and services proven to reduce the likelihood of re-offending, broaden eligible crimes, and provide for conditional sealing of records for certain crimes.
- Use validated risk assessment tools when dealing with juveniles in the justice system, to tailor services for individual needs and combat racial and ethnic disparities. Comply with IDEA mandates including the right to a free public education complete with academics, therapies, and other supports.
- Assist youth leaving the juvenile justice system and prevent their return.
- Create a non-punitive system and therapeutic response that better serves the needs of youth, keeping families together and enhancing community safety.
- Support funding for the expansion of juvenile justice and prevention services.
- **Educate members** and the community regarding issues, concerns and solutions for youth in the juvenile justice system.
- Promote initiatives to address racial, ethnic and socioeconomic inequities in the juvenile justice system.

BACKGROUND

Even though the Governor’s Commission on Youth, Public Safety and Justice has stated, “it is critically important for New York State to implement reforms,” New York State has yet to amend its laws. The current system, overwhelmingly impacting youth of color, has seen high rates of reoffending and re-arrest. These youth are hindered when seeking housing, education and employment. Neuroscience research has proven that the adolescent brain does not fully develop until age 25, particularly in those areas that govern judgment and impulse control. Nearly 40,000 New York State 16 and 17 year olds in 2012 had their cases handled in adult criminal court where they are less likely to receive the rehabilitative services they need to succeedⁱ

- Over 70% of the 16 and 17 year olds arrested in New York State are black or Hispanic.
- Of those sentenced to incarceration, 80% are black or Hispanic.ⁱⁱ
- The majority of criminal acts committed by children and adolescents are misdemeanors.
- Youth in adult prisons are twice as likely to report being beaten by staff, and nearly 50% more likely to be attacked with a weapon than children placed in youth facilities.
- Youth in adult prisons face the highest risk of sexual assault.
- Youth in adult prisons are often placed in solitary confinement. The isolation young people face in adult facilities is destructive to their mental health and can cause irreparable harm. Youth are 36 times more likely to commit suicide in an adult facility than in a juvenile facility.ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ <http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/ad1/Committees&Programs/CounselChildren&Parents%28LG%29/April2014.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.cccnewyork.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CCCRaiseTheAgeFactSheets1.pdf>

According to the NYS PTA cooperating partner Families Together in New York State, a study comparing New York and New Jersey (which has the current age in juvenile justice system through age 18) revealed:

- Youth prosecuted in NY adult courts were 85% more likely to be re-arrested for violent crimes than those prosecuted in the New Jersey juvenile courts.
- NYS youth were 44% more likely to be re-arrested for felony property crimes.
- The odds of re-arrest were greatest for those youths with no prior arrest record who were prosecuted and sentenced as adults.
- The chances of being re-incarcerated were 26% greater for New York youths prosecuted as adults.
- In New Jersey, youth whose cases were either dismissed or who received lighter sanctions and were offered an array of support services were more likely to be rehabilitated.^{iv}

National PTA has partnered with the Campaign for Youth Justice to advocate nationally for juvenile justice system reform. National PTA's position clearly states that the justice system should "prohibit youth who are charged with a serious crime from being tried in the adult court system unless there has been an opportunity for a judicial hearing and appeal. Prohibit the incarceration of youth in adult facilities. Assist youth leaving the juvenile justice system, and prevent their return."^v

While PTA "has prioritized keeping children out of adult facilities . . ." [it] "advocates for an entirely separate juvenile justice system for all youth under 18, including courts, and advocates for improvements for policies that would keep children from being tried in the adult system entirely."^{vi} Youth should be held accountable for their mistakes but must be dealt with in developmentally appropriate ways that will provide a positive outcome for them and their communities.^{vii}

Adopted 7/15

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://raisetheagency.com/get-the-facts>

^{iv} <http://www.ftnys.org/raise-the-age/>

^v <http://www.pta.org/about/content.cfm?ItemNumber=986>

^{vi} <http://www.pta.org/files/Juvenile%20Justice%20and%20Delinquency%20Prevention%20Workshop%20Final.pdf>

^{vii} <http://www.ftnys.org/raise-the-age/>



Position Paper:
SCHOOL DISTRICT REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. was organized in 1897 to inform parents and educators of matters in all areas that affect children and youth. The New York State PTA and the National PTA build networks for their members to work together within the state and across the nation in those areas of concern. The New York State PTA works with community agencies which also have an interest in youth. The work of the New York State PTA and the National PTA has been performed within the parameters established by the PTA Purposes.

One of the policies of PTA is that the organization is noncommercial, and the projects and programs of all PTAs, therefore, should be educational in nature. Fundraising is NOT a major effort of PTA, a not-for-profit organization, as identified by Section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Revenue Code which allows PTAs their tax-exempt status.

It is necessary for PTA to raise funds for programs and leadership development, the educational components of PTA work. PTAs are not “booster clubs” for schools and school districts. Pressure from various school personnel may be placed on PTAs to finance programs and projects. Just as PTAs remain neutral during teacher negotiations, they must refrain from financial support of schools and school districts.

PTA’s job is not to provide financial assistance to the schools but to provide an understanding of educational policies and goals to the community, particularly to the parents of children attending those schools. PTA members should be included on committees planning school district budgets. Budgets should provide funds for projects and programs that enhance the education and welfare of all the students. The PTA should support the passage of fiscally responsible budgets.

PTAs have found themselves faced with requests from school districts for items such as financing and managing hot lunch and security programs. While PTAs understand the importance of such programs, they cannot be responsible for them. PTAs should also be aware that there are inherent dangers in becoming involved beyond their own areas of educational concern. In addition to insurance problems, PTAs could find themselves acting as employers and being responsible for income taxes, workmen’s compensation, disability, and all the other legal concerns with which employers must deal.

The financial crises facing many governmental agencies and school districts are going to grow in number and severity in the years ahead. For more information, refer to the *NYS PTA Resource Guide*, Finance and Insurance Section, “Donations of Equipment to School Districts”. The funds needed to maintain present programs will increase as costs continue to escalate, thus making the future of new programs problematical.

PTA is an advocate for the welfare of all children and youth. It encourages the inclusion in both curricular and extracurricular activities of opportunities for youth to become the most that they can be as they prepare for careers, family living and citizenship in our democracy.

Adopted 11/91
Reaffirmed 8/00
Reaffirmed 7/07
Reaffirmed 7/14



Position Paper: NYS PTA AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

Public education has been in existence since the 1600's giving opportunity to educate all children and youth through the use of public funds. The ideal of a free and appropriate public education at the elementary level was within reach for all American children by the end of the 19th century. In 1894, the guarantee of a free primary and secondary education was embodied in the NYS constitution stating, "The legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free common schools, wherein all the children of this state may be educated."

Today's education system offers school choice for students. The concept of school choice is embedded in the principle that it empowers parents to choose between schools in a true democratic sense as it provides increased incentive for schools to respond to the market choices of parents of varying economic backgrounds. Charter schools offer one form of public school choice.

National PTA and NYS PTA acknowledge charter schools as one avenue to school reform. Both support the creation of innovative schools that are based on a set of principles designed to retain and enhance the integrity of public schools. This support is contingent upon the fact that charter schools reflect the positions and principles of the National PTA.

In accordance with National PTA, NYS PTA is prepared to assist charter schools in meeting the academic, social, physical, and emotional needs of students through the creation of new PTA units. PTAs promote active parent and family involvement and provide access to PTA programs, services, and leadership.

NYS PTA adheres to the beliefs that charter schools need to:

- Be open to all students, including students with limited English proficiency, students with special needs, and students from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.
- Comply with federal and state laws governing public schools, including laws regarding teacher qualifications, testing standards, and fiscal accountability.
- Adhere to federal, state, and local laws designed to ensure student health and safety.
- Be accountable to local school boards in the districts where they are located.
- Be funded in such a way as to preclude the charging of tuition or mandatory fees not charged by other public schools in the district.
- Be independent of nonpublic, sectarian, religious, or home-based school affiliations.
- Include parents in meaningful decision-making roles.

National PTA believes that all levels of the government (federal, state and local) have a central role in providing services that support public education and must share in providing adequate funding for our schools. The intent of the NYS Charter Schools Act of 1998 was to allow for the establishment of models of academic innovation that were free of bureaucratic regulation but would be held strictly accountable for their performance. Unfortunately, New York's law funded this experiment by diverting money away from its traditional public schools. While a number of NYC charter schools have met the standard of improving achievement, studies have shown that a majority of charter schools outside the city have failed. The original intent of the Act has led to unintended consequences in that some communities suffer serious financial drain on traditional public school programs and have no local recourse.

Fair funding of public education has been a priority of the NYS PTA. Our current position, *Funding for Charter Schools**, was established in 2001 and seeks to address the unintended consequences cited above. This resolution asks that PTA members urge and support legislation to *change the method of funding* NYS's charter schools in order to eliminate the potential for an adverse effect upon traditional public schools and the communities they are intended to benefit.

The rationale behind this position was based upon the following facts:

- that funding of NYS charter schools is derived from a formula-based proportion of K-12 spending (approved operating expense), including non-related and special education services
- that school districts still must provide transportation, textbooks, library materials, computer software, and health and welfare services to charter school students
- that reduction of existing enrollments in several buildings generally does not reduce the total cost of staffing, utilities, supplies, insurance, etc.

- that a public school on contingency may not increase their budget beyond the cap set by the state legislature but would still be required to pay the charter school at the previous year's approved operating expense. This would potentially force the public school district to eliminate or reduce programs and services to the students enrolled in the traditional public schools.

The popular view is that the PTA has opposed charter schools. The reality is that NYS PTA acknowledges charter schools as an avenue to school reform and supports actions that rationally invest in innovation and experimentation. We support the passage of legislation that would change the method of funding charter schools to eliminate adverse impact on public school districts. NYS PTA supports charter school legislation that will ensure accountability to the public by:

- Requiring that all applications/renewals of charters be approved by the local school board before being received and acted on by any chartering entity
- Requiring that charter schools shall not enroll more than 5% of a local district's student enrollment nor divert more than 5% of a local district's budget
- Requiring a 14-month notice period between the approval of a charter application and the opening of a charter school;

and that minimizes financial impact by:

- Providing transitional state aid (100% in year one, 60% in year two, 40% in year three) to ease the financial impact on local districts when a new charter school opens
- Providing that districts shall be eligible to receive transitional aid for charter schools that already exist or that have already been approved to commence operations
- Providing for the immediate recovery of funds by a local school district when: a) students who signed up do not attend a charter school; b) students return to a regular district school from a charter school; c) a charter school ceases operation before the end of the school year
- Revising the Annual Operating Expense (AOE) formula for charter schools to
 - hold districts harmless for fixed costs that do not decrease when students attend charter schools
 - differentiate between the per-pupil cost for K-8 (90%) and secondary (110%) students
 - apply contingency budget constraints to funding that flows to charter schools

While we acknowledge and share the concerns of some of our education partners in the field regarding charter schools, we recognize that the world is changing and we would like to be a positive influence on changes that will ensure every child has the opportunity to attain excellence in education and quality of life. It is our belief that parents and families will assume an active role in making these changes. NYS PTA is prepared to be the premier child advocacy organization in the state to lead all schools and school children to success.

*See *Where We Stand: The Basis for Action of the New York State PTA*, page 8

Adopted 3/07
Reaffirmed 7/14

Position Paper:
USE OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON
HIGH-STAKES EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

Background

Federal mandates emanating from “A Nation at Risk” (1983), “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB, 2002) and “Race to The Top” (RTTT, 2009) have combined with NYS law and Commissioner regulations to result in a variety of high-stakes educational decisions based on student assessments. As a consequence, student assessment has tipped toward high-stakes testing of student achievement in core subjects such as math and English language arts. Such measures have resulted in sanctions on school buildings and districts failing to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress under NCLB. NYS legislation and Regents regulations extend similar sanctions to the individual educator. Response at the school district level has often been to reduce or eliminate instructional time in so-called “non-core” subjects such as art, music, science and physical education in favor of instruction and preparation for testing in areas such as math and language arts.

NYS PTA has historically supported the establishment of high academic standards as well as the appropriate use of standardized tests to assess student progress, so long as their purpose is to improve the overall quality of instruction and student learning. NYS PTA maintains that all new curricula and assessments must be vetted, funded and implemented appropriately. NYSED must always allow sufficient time for professional development, and creation of instructional materials for any new initiative.

Parents, educators and policy makers have raised concerns that overemphasis on test results as the basis for making high-stakes decisions affecting students and educators is eroding access to a well-rounded education. Information gathered in a January 2013 survey of NYS PTA leaders, combined with ongoing research as well as input from parents and educators raises concerns regarding excessive time devoted to testing, test preparation, narrowing of curricula and undue stress on students. Survey respondents also expressed concerns related to the potential for unfair employee decisions, less meaningful family engagement and the development of an adversarial climate between parents and schools due to publication of high-stakes test results. NYS PTA encourages positive education reform that results in students who are college and career ready, reduces the achievement gap between various student groups, fosters the education of the whole child and recognizes families and parents as essential partners in the education process.

Positions

New York State PTA supports legislation and policy decisions that enable state and local officials to design a comprehensive and effective multi-pronged approach to meaningful pupil assessment and educator evaluation. The basis for student, teacher or leader evaluation should be reliable and valid and include multiple measures. We conclude, however, that an overemphasis on high-stakes testing is detrimental to students and the education process. In this regard, NYS PTA offers the following positions:

- We support continual development and implementation of higher learning standards, such as Common Core, and efforts by state and federal agencies to improve learning and assessment of learning based on these standards. While student assessment is necessary, linking the results to educator performance before Common Core has been properly implemented threatens the success of this reform effort. Therefore, NYS PTA calls on NYSED to suspend the link between student performance on NYS-required tests and educator evaluation for at least one year until instructional components of the Common Core have been fully and properly implemented;
- Education of the whole child recognizes the importance and value of all developmental facets in children. Rather than reducing accountability to the narrow testing of facts, assessments based on the new standards must also reflect learning that integrates creativity and appreciation of the arts and fosters application of learned skills to real life situations. Student learning should always be driven by standards and curriculum, not by tests;
- Tests whose results form the basis for high-stakes decisions create stress and have negative effects for students from all backgrounds, but especially for low-income students, English language learners, and students with special needs and for whom test performance may not be an accurate reflection of skill mastery. Assessment strategies must recognize such disadvantages and respond appropriately. NYS PTA supports a NYSED waiver request to the US Department of Education to offer fair assessments for children with unique challenges. It is important to test these students based on level of instruction rather than factors such as chronological age;

- We support the establishment of a strong, effective evaluation system for educators (APPR). We strongly support an emphasis on direct observation of instruction and review of non test measures of performance that directly correspond to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards and teacher standards adopted by the NYS Board of Regents that comprise 60% of the annual APPR;
- With significant state aid eligibility based on timely implementation of educator assessments, the state must periodically conduct and fund a thorough independent evaluation of the APPR process, including the role of testing and its effects on students; and
- While it is appropriate to share broad results of testing and its use in assessing educator performance, any public release of such data must not be permitted to interfere with the essential goal of improving instruction.

Summary

High-stakes testing associated with political initiatives has changed the landscape of education in New York State and across our country. The effects of some of these changes may be unintended, but when devoid of a sound educational rationale, they can actually interfere with educational improvement. NYS PTA supports the continued development and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and the academic challenge needed to compete in a global society. We also support the need for meaningful pupil assessment and educator accountability. Current trends unfortunately exaggerate the use of narrowly defined results to judge educational performance and make high-stakes educational decisions. These trends cannot be permitted to stifle student and educator creativity or to impede the imperative to educate the whole child.

Adopted 11/13



Position Paper: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The New York State Congress of Parents & Teachers, Inc. believes that all children, including very young children, should be given complete and equal access to educational opportunities. The education programs should include the Standards set by the Board of Regents, and the students should be given all the benefits of the NYS Education system.

In order to provide children with an early start to learning, NYS PTA believes that New York State Education Department (NYSED) must ensure that the achievement levels of all children and youth will increase and that each person will become a viable citizen of the community; first the school community and then the community at large. Early education for young children, especially ages 3-8, must include the social/emotional skills, physical skills, as well as academics to ensure that education and life skills include the whole child. It is especially important that parents and guardians be an integral part of the early childhood education program to assist in goal setting; therefore, a parent involvement policy should be part of the required mandates of the Regent's policy on Early Childhood Education.

Enhancing the opportunities for children to read, write, and learn math and science in the early years will increase the skills needed for successful student achievement. This can be effectively accomplished if young children learn to love learning, especially reading.

It is essential to consider the social-emotional component in any plan for early childhood education. The child needs to learn communication skills, how to get along with others, and to learn the necessary and proper school behaviors to become a competent member of society. We therefore recommend that the policy increases the guidance support staff to assist in this aspect of development. We need to teach children how to be comfortable in the education environment, and professionals in psychology and guidance are trained in this area.

NYS PTA believes that all children should be provided with healthy choices. These include nutrition, mental health and physical education programs, and recess opportunities; these need to be a mandated part of this policy.

NYS PTA advocates for full funding for these programs, for professional development of teachers, and for parent-involvement programs in all school districts.

Important Points within the Regents policy:

****Expand initiatives to provide information, training and support to parents and other caregivers of young children from birth to age two.**

NYS PTA not only agrees with this necessary component but encourages that our organization be a part of the training, not only for parents of young children, but also extended to parents of children from birth through age 21. We advocate for a mandated parent-involvement policy to be developed jointly by the NYSED and the NYS PTA that includes training to parents on how to communicate and partner with the schools and the education community at large.

****Establish universal pre-kindergarten statewide in all public school districts.**

NYS PTA wholeheartedly agrees that this component is necessary and that it be a part of the policy. We would like the funds needed to be mandated as part of the state budget in order to provide the best supports for young children. This would include the academic needs, the social-emotional needs, and the physical needs of children. We would like the option of a parent (guardian) opting out for one year, if the child is developmentally not ready for a full-time program. We recommend that a mandated screening be established, that is based upon scientific research, to assist in determining the needs of and goals for each individual child.

****Change compulsory school age from six to five years old.**

NYS PTA believes that there should be consistency for children who are already in a school setting because of special education needs, and having the transition for them at age five into the public setting would be beneficial in transferring supports as needed into their neighborhood school. This would allow parents to transition easily into the needed parent-involvement component of public schools. Research shows that the earlier that a parent is involved in the school environment, the higher the level of student achievement. The funds for schools should be increased in the state budget to cover the costs of an earlier entrance into school. We believe that because the academics are increasing, that the entrance into school at age five would be beneficial. We believe that there should be complete screening to see if the child is developmentally ready for a full time program, and that the "cutoff" date could be changed accordingly.

****Require full day kindergarten for all age eligible children.**

NYS PTA supports the requirement for full-day kindergarten. Many children need a transitional period to adjust to a full day of school, especially those who have never been in school or have been in school only one or two mornings a week. A process needs to be established for these children to enter school initially on a part-time basis, and then transition to full time. Transportation, adequate funding, and highly qualified teachers with support staff need to be included in this full time kindergarten plan.

****Strengthen pre-kindergarten through grade 3 programs by ensuring the use of research-based strategies in ways that are appropriate to the age and development of children.**

NYS PTA believes in using scientifically-based reading and writing programs and to have data on children's progress so that parents can help in the strategies of learning. The reports, the programs and the strategies need to be written in a complete, concise and easy to access method so that all parents can participate. This should include translation of materials into other languages if needed.

****Increase support to students with disabilities (SWD) through earlier access to inclusive educational settings.**

NYS PTA believes that we should give access to inclusive programs to SWD but that for some cases, the self-contained programs are still needed and should be available. This change into an only inclusive setting should never be an all or nothing approach. The individual child must be viewed as a whole child with strengths and weaknesses, and a full discussion of those factors must be completed before any child is placed into an inclusive setting. The parent must be fully involved in this determination and should be included since they have relevant information on whether their child can be placed in the inclusive setting or needs to be transitioned into the setting at a later time. Tests and assessments should also reflect those individual needs as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the child in the academic, social-emotional and physical environment of the school setting.

****Expand opportunities for meaningful engagement of parents and other caregivers as active participants in their child's education.**

NYS PTA believes that parents are the first and most enduring teachers for their children. They are their child's best advocates and supporters and need to be an integral part of the school system. This can be accomplished by having meaningful participation in schools through shared decision-making teams and membership on other policy committees.

****Expand collaborative efforts by leveraging the resources of community organizations that offer comprehensive services, including health and nutrition.**

NYS PTA recognizes that many community organizations can and should be available as resources for parents and children in schools. If services can be provided by outside organizations, including screenings for children (i.e. Lighthouse for screening eye disorders, dental groups to screen for problems with teeth, screening for lead poisoning), training seminars on how to be knowledgeable of the total child, more parents would access these fine resources and this would add to the community support for the school district.

****Review alignment of State Standards, curriculum and assessment in prekindergarten through grade 3.**

NYS PTA agrees that curriculum used within the state education system for all grade levels must be aligned with the state standards in order to assure that children are prepared for the required academics, and can be successful students and adults in the community. This alignment will ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve a diploma and go onto higher education and/or the workforce. The education for a child needs to be viewed as a complete process from birth through adulthood.

****Work with institutions of higher education to focus the preparation and training of prekindergarten through grade 3 teachers and administrators on the developmental and academic needs of young children.**

NYS PTA agrees that there should be good preparation and training of all teachers but that it is not necessary to limit teachers to qualify for only pre-K to grade 3; rather that certification include pre-K to grade 6.

****Mobilize the resources of the USNY to support quality early childhood programs for children from birth through grade 3.**

NYS PTA supports the need for librarians and reading specialists to work on early childhood programs in order to develop relevant skills in the young child. We encourage that the Parents as Reading Partners (PARP) and the Reflections Arts in Education programs be included as available resources for early childhood education.

****Establish a stable funding structure to support prekindergarten and full-day kindergarten initiatives across the State.**

NYS PTA supports the full funding of prekindergarten and full-day kindergarten if the programs become part of the mandates for early childhood education. We support the full funding of teacher training, and for parent involvement to support the early childhood programs in the State.

NYS PTA believes that the Regent's revised policy on Early Childhood Education is comprehensive but that the policy must have a meaningful parent involvement piece which includes training, increased communication and partnerships between the parents and school districts. For every young child, there is a parent or guardian who is working for success of that child, and without that parent, the child does not have the best opportunity to achieve. Every child in NYS needs a good start.

Adopted 8/06
Reaffirmed 7/13



Position Paper:

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN POVERTY: THE PUBLIC SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY

Poverty and doing poorly in school often go hand-in-hand. Children and youth who do poorly in school often do not finish their education. They become less employable and are more apt to perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

1. Children and youth in poverty frequently live in cities or rural areas, and where there is a high concentration of poor families. Schools with a higher poverty level tend to have lower achievement statistics. School districts often do not have local resources to provide anything more than minimal services for their low achieving population.
2. Children and youth in poverty often receive fewer educational resources; they are taught in overcrowded, dilapidated surroundings without sufficient resources to address the needs of these children and youth.
3. One in five children in the State of New York live in poverty. Many children and youth, living in poverty, are educationally disadvantaged. Lower performing schools tend to have higher concentrations of minority students and children and youth in poverty.

New York State PTA believes that schools reflect our democratic heritage and must take a leadership role in breaking the cycle of poverty. New York State PTA accepts the opportunity and the responsibility to advocate for the educational needs of all children and youth and their families in today's demanding world. In collaboration with other organizations, we can impact public policy to address the human and financial resources needed for each child to achieve his or her potential.

New York State PTA requests that its membership:

Urge school board members and school administrators to:

1. Foster community-wide expectations that schools have a responsibility to teach all children and youth;
2. Set policy to protect children and youth from discriminatory discipline or educational placement;
3. Develop and recommend budgets that equitably allocate resources for all programs and in all schools within the school district;
4. Set policies to provide information to parents regarding the educational program of their children and youth and to provide for parental input in the decision-making processes;
5. Develop programs to meet the needs of all children and youth keeping high expectations for each child;
6. Develop and monitor individual student achievement with sensitivity to individual learning modes and cultural and economic backgrounds.

Expect principals to:

1. Structure the school's organization and encourage the teaching staff to address the many different learning situations for the child who is educationally disadvantaged;
2. Emphasize in-service education in the areas of classroom management and the development of instructional skills for working with children and youth who live in poverty and are educationally disadvantaged;
3. Provide and support opportunities for parents to understand their responsibilities for their children's education;
4. Develop active outreach programs to include parents of children and youth in poverty and of emancipated youth.

Ask teachers to:

1. Hold consistent, high expectations for all children and youth;
2. Recognize the individual needs of all children and youth;
3. Respect student diversity;
4. Communicate with parents on a regular basis and encourage their cooperation.

Encourage parents to:

1. Hold consistent, high expectations for all children and youth;
2. Be active education partners by communicating, advocating and supporting programs for children and youth in poverty.

Call upon legislators to:

1. Provide equitable distribution of funds, employing the “leveling up” concept;
2. Provide financial incentives to maintain funding for successful programs and maintain the physical plant to meet program needs;
3. Urge an increase in federal dollars to supplement and not supplant state and local intervention programs.

Adopted 11/87
Reaffirmed 11/91
Reaffirmed 2/00
Reaffirmed 8/06
Reaffirmed 7/13



Position Paper:
EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE LEAST RESTRICTED ENVIRONMENT (LRE)

In 1975, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) was passed. This was updated in 1990 and called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA was reauthorized and signed into law as Public Law 105-17 in 1997. In 2004 IDEA was updated and reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act, yet retained the IDEA acronym. Prior to the passage of this federal law, many children with disabilities were excluded from the public schools. IDEA guaranteed that children with disabilities could no longer be denied a free, appropriate public education (FAPE).

IDEA states that the education of children with disabilities must be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Each public agency shall insure that to the “maximum extent appropriate” children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other health care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled; and that special classes, separated schooling or other removal of disabled children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. The law takes a common sense approach to this issue: children with disabilities should be educated with children who are not disabled to the “maximum extent appropriate”.

IDEA requires that a continuum of alternative placements be made available “to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services.” This would range from the most restrictive (a full-time residential school or hospital setting) to the least restrictive (the regular classroom) with a variety of settings in between.

A student would be placed in an educational setting based on his or her individualized education program (IEP) and as close as possible to the child’s home. “Unless a disabled child’s individual education program requires some other arrangement, the child is educated in the school which he or she would attend if not disabled; and in selecting the least restrictive environment, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services which he or she needs.”

As a result of the least restrictive environment provision in IDEA, two practices have evolved: mainstreaming and inclusion. Mainstreaming means placing students who have been in self-contained classrooms into regular classes for most or all of the school day. Additional services may be provided by a consultant teacher or by pullout programs. Students are placed in the regular classroom with the expectation that they will be able to maintain similar academic progress with their non-disabled peers in the class.

Inclusion is a philosophy that defines inclusive education as: providing to all students, including those with severe disabilities, equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services, with the needed supplementary aids and support services, in age-appropriate classes in their neighborhood schools, in order to prepare students for productive lives as full members of the society. Inclusion differs from the mainstreaming philosophy in that students with special needs are placed in age-appropriate classes and are not necessarily expected to maintain the same academic progress as their non-disabled peers.

Many schools continue to move from mainstreaming to inclusion. In some cases, this shift has been made thoughtfully with adequate staff development, planning and support services. In other cases, financial constraints or other pressures have created situations where students with disabilities have been placed in regular classrooms without the appropriate staff preparation and/or support services.

New York State PTA accepts the opportunity and the responsibility to advocate for the educational needs of all children. Within the population of students with disabilities there is a wide range of needs from mild to severe. Academic expectations should increase for all students as they progress from primary through secondary school.

New York State PTA supports the IDEA requirements that a continuum of services must be made available to students with disabilities and that placement decisions are made on an individualized basis, based on the student's needs and not hampered by financial constraints, with parents and the student as age appropriate as equal partners in the decision-making process. When students with disabilities are placed in regular classroom settings, appropriate staff development and support services must be provided for staff so that the learning environment benefits all children.

Adopted 7/94
Reaffirmed 7/99
Reaffirmed 8/06
Reaffirmed 7/13



Position Paper: FUNDRAISING AND THE PTA

The primary function of PTA is child advocacy. PTA is not a fundraising organization. National PTA's fundraising policy states "When planning the year's activities PTAs need to use the 3 to 1 rule: that there should be at least three non-fundraising projects aimed at helping parents and children or advocacy for every one fundraising event." Units and councils must recognize that the time and energy of its members are limited. This time and energy must be used effectively to promote PTA programs and projects. There are other organizations which exist primarily for the purpose of raising funds for the needs of children and youth.

In every area of children's well-being, including parent education and community betterment, PTAs have carried out successful programs of service and action on modest budgets. While every association needs some funds to carry on its program, large amounts of money are not essential to effective PTA work.

Use of Funds

It is imperative that current PTA leadership encourage and support activities that will ensure the future of PTA. With effective fundraising comes the responsibility for the judicious and appropriate use of such funds.

There must be active affiliation with the National and State PTAs through attendance at workshops, conferences, and conventions and through the use of national and state publications. PTA funds are expected to be used to strengthen the PTA network.

Funds used wisely and only to advance the purposes and goals of PTA will be funds well spent.

A PTA unit or council should first establish its programs and projects for the year. The budget, which reflects the financial needs of these programs and projects, is then adopted by the membership. The fundraising committee should plan to raise the difference between the income from the local portion of membership dues and the proposed expenditures. The committee's plan of work must be approved by the executive board.

For many PTAs, the best solution is a single annual fundraising project. One well-planned event will usually raise the necessary funds to finance the year's activities. If the project is to reflect the high principles of the organization, it will be educational, social or recreational. Often a project that seems to be simply for entertainment can serve an educational purpose by raising the standard of entertainment in the community or by giving the community a concept of the constructive use of leisure time.

The following questions may be used as guidelines in selecting and planning a money-raising project that will be both successful and worthy of the PTA:

1. *Can the fundraiser be justified by the Purposes of PTA?*

If the reason for the fundraiser can not be easily justified by one of the Purposes of PTA, it should not be considered.

2. *Does it conform to the basic policies stated in your bylaws?*

The basic policies require that PTA be noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan.

Though PTA may never endorse a product or person, it may deal with commercial firms to plan fundraising events. (refer to National PTA's online resources at www.pta.org)

3. *Will it create good will for the PTA, enlisting the participation of many persons and creating a spirit of comradeship?*

A fundraising event can be a means of creating a sense of community and of attracting advocates for children.

4. *If children take part in the project, have their welfare and safety been considered with utmost care?*

A fundraising event should not take advantage of children's willingness and inexperience and should avoid pressuring them. Great care and caution must be exercised when children are asked to participate. When children take part in projects, their share should be either a natural outgrowth of regular school work or a constructive leisure time activity. **PTA must not exploit children.**

5. *Is it an activity that serves as a positive example for children and youth?*

Fundraising events should be selected with care, reflecting the moral sense and attitudes in the community.

6. *Are school regulations with regard to fire laws and safety precautions strictly observed when the project is held in a school building?*

Prior to the event all safety factors such as maximum capacity, fire exits, accessibility for the handicapped, etc., should be reviewed with the appropriate authorities. Fundraising events held elsewhere should be held to the same scrutiny.

7. *Do local, state, or federal laws, State Education Department regulations, and New York State Constitution apply?*

Care must be taken to see that no law is violated. The project must have the approval and support of school authorities. There are many local, state and federal laws and tax regulations that must be considered in relation to fundraising activities. Since the problems vary so much from community to community and are so dependent on the type of activity involved, it might be well for a PTA to discuss the proposed fundraising project with appropriate PTA region board members and local officials. Some fundraising events may be questionable. *It is highly recommended that the approval and support of school authorities who are knowledgeable of education law be obtained when a school building is to be used.*

8. *Can a unit, council or Region accept sponsorship as a source of raising funds?*

Sponsorship must be aligned with the purposes of PTA. Companies that provide goods or services in conflict with PTA purposes, resolutions or positions should not be accepted.

9. *May an individual PTA member accept gifts or incentives in consideration for partnering with a company?*

Gifts and/or incentives are not appropriate. PTA fundraising activities should not be a source of personal gain for any child or adult.

PTAs should not be expected to fill the gaps in school budgets.

PTA representatives should be actively involved in the design, review and passage of a school budget. This kind of activity opens two-way lines of communication, breeds a community climate of understanding and commonality of purpose, and ensures that earmarked funding will be allocated in the appropriate budget. PTA should not attempt to abrogate the legal functions of other educational entities. Under no conditions should long-term programs of support ever be initiated or offered by a PTA. Working to secure adequate funding for programs has a more enduring benefit than purchasing items of equipment. The purchasing of school equipment and the payment of school staff salaries are the responsibility of school administration and school boards. In only the most severe and extenuating circumstances should exceptions be made, and then to be restricted to the crisis of the moment.

PTA energies should be used to encourage the school board and administration to evaluate the need for a pilot program or the purchase of equipment, with possible input from the PTA, and then to include the cost of this equipment or material in its budget. PTA may at times find it necessary to initiate a pilot project to demonstrate the value of a program or purchase equipment that entails fundraising.

Before the PTA takes any action to provide a pilot project, the PTA should carefully evaluate the project with guidance from its PTA Region. A thorough investigation of all the ramifications of the project should be made in conjunction with the administration (refer to *Education Law*) to determine that the pilot project is supportive of the school's program and that it will be an integral part of the curriculum.

Surplus Funds

If the proceeds from a PTA fundraiser are more than were anticipated, the PTA should:

- Postpone further fundraising for the current year.
- Put the money into a savings account.
- Avoid scheduling fundraisers for the next year if the account has sufficient money to cover the year's planned programs and projects.

Remember that your PTA must have a general membership vote on how to spend funds that are in excess of the budgeted amount.

Adopted 11/84
Reaffirmed 11/90
Reaffirmed 8/98
Reaffirmed 8/06
Reaffirmed 7/13



Position Paper: GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION OF TEXTBOOKS AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Whether selecting or evaluating textbooks, library materials, instructional materials or classroom resources, a well-written, well-communicated board policy based on input from all constituents is the key. Parents and PTA members may be asked to participate in committees creating or reviewing board policies for the selection of instructional materials. Parents who participate in review of the policy and/or materials according to these board policies must take special care to represent all parents and families, not just their personal point of view.

Developing a Materials Selection Policy

Every school system should have a comprehensive written policy on the selection and review of instructional materials. This policy should include textbooks, library books, periodicals, reading materials, records and media. The policy should be well communicated and available to staff, parents and community members.

Suggestions for developing a selection and review of instructional materials policy have been compiled using recommendations from state education departments, American Library Association, American Association of School Administrators and the American Association of Publishers. Their recommendations include:

The process to develop a materials selection policy:

1. The Board of Education or its designee appoints an ad-hoc committee with representation from the school community, administrators, teachers, school librarians, parents and students to develop the policy;
2. Once the committee makes a report, comment should be sought from key implementers such as department chairmen, established curriculum committees, teachers' association, principals, school librarians and the PTA;
3. Upon adoption of the policy, the superintendent and/or representative should disseminate and communicate the policy to all appropriate staff and community members. The school administration will implement and evaluate the policy, and if necessary, recommend future revisions in collaboration with staff, parents and community members. The Board of Education should periodically call for input and review the policy as needed.

The components of a materials selection policy should include:

1. A statement that indicates that the Board of Education as the governing body has a legal responsibility for the selection process of all material for the school. A statement delegating the selection responsibility to appropriate personnel or committees for textbooks, library materials and supplementary materials.
2. A statement of philosophy or goals and the objectives of the selection policy, inclusive of the definitions of the rights and responsibilities of various affected constituencies such as students, parents, teachers and other educators.
3. Statements that define the materials covered by the policy, the criteria for the evaluation and selection, the criteria for potentially controversial areas and the procedure for handling challenged materials should be defined in the policy.

The criteria for evaluating and selecting materials may include:

1. the excellence of the material (artistic, library, etc);
2. the appropriateness to the academic, social, and age level of the user;
3. the superiority in treatment of controversial issues;
4. the ability to stimulate intellectual and social development.

The criteria should consider the authenticity, appropriateness, interest, content, cost, relationship to the curriculum and circumstance of use when evaluating and selecting materials.

The process or procedure for challenging or questioning materials, a parent's right, should clearly outline:

1. the review committee membership;
2. the process for handling challenged materials;
3. the procedure for recommendation to the superintendent or Board for the removal of materials;
4. the appeal process to the Board of Education which makes the final determination of the issue.

The Board of Education may seek assistance from outside organizations, both professional and community-based, when deciding an appeal.

Adopted 02/85
Reaffirmed 11/90
Reaffirmed 08/98
Reaffirmed 08/06
Reaffirmed 07/13



Position Paper: INTEGRATING THE ARTS INTO EDUCATION

The New York State Learning Standards for the Arts provide school districts with direction and basic structure for developing curricula that will both integrate and advance the arts in education. The State Education Department and the Board of Regents have come to recognize what PTA has long advocated – the importance of the arts to the complete and successful growth of students.

Why Standards for the Arts?

The New York Learning Standards for the Arts reflect the educational goals that are common to dance, music, theater, and the visual arts while recognizing the distinct aspect of each discipline. Visual arts foster self esteem, problem solving skills, clarity of expression (the forerunner of communication), and critical thinking through evaluating the works of others and personal satisfaction. Playing a musical instrument develops team effort and improves memory, logic and general creativity. Dance and theater hone skills in self-discipline, expression, concentration and poise.

These important skills will enable students to achieve success in all phases and subjects of their complete education. The following list emphasizes the goals set by the Department of Education, recognizing the importance of a multifaceted arts education.

New York State Learning Standards for the Arts

1. *Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts* – Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performances in the arts (dance, music, theater and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts;
2. *Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources* – Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles;
3. *Responding To and Analyzing Works of Art* – Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting individual works to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought;
4. *Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts* – Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

PTA's Role

PTA has always understood the need for integrating the arts into education, and continues to advocate for programs, such as the National Reflections program, courses and enrichment activities to assure a successful outcome for all students. It is important that school districts set curricula that support the goals of the arts and that teachers promote these goals in their instruction. The “T” in PTA is a major component in the success of this or any educational endeavor, and we recognize and support teacher efforts on behalf of all children and youth. However, teachers and administrators cannot shoulder the burden of gaining support for arts programs alone.

Some strategies/actions that can help parents gain support for arts programs are:

- *Keep consistent communication with local, region and state PTAs;*
- *Build an art advocacy team with other parents, colleagues, arts councils, museums, university arts faculty, and community members. Send a unified message;*
- *Understand the status of arts education in your school, community and state. By knowing the arts requirements at the elementary, middle and high school levels in your school district, the arts requirements for graduation, and the school budget for arts education, you become an informed advocate;*
- *Promote the need for assessment of students' progress and the effectiveness of the program. Use documents such as the Arts Education Assessment Framework and the National Visual Arts Standards as references;*
- *Reinforce the place of arts in the regular curriculum for all students as an essential component for general education. Every child should receive a balanced, sequential and high quality program of instruction in the arts, taught by certified art, music, theater and dance teachers.*

As our children move into this century, they will need to prepare their personal “canvas” to display the skills that they develop through the arts. Integrating the arts into education will provide the raw materials that they will need to shine.

Adopted 11/98
Reaffirmed 08/06
Reaffirmed 07/13

Position Paper: **PRESCRIPTION AND OVER THE COUNTER DRUG ABUSE**

Prescription drugs are licensed medicines regulated by laws and require a physician's prescription for a person to obtain them. These medications are safe if taken as prescribed by the person for whom they are intended. Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are available without prescriptions and like prescription drugs; they are safe when used according to package directions or a medical professional's recommendations.

Teenagers are particularly vulnerable to abusing these drugs because they do not perceive over the counter or prescription drugs as having negative consequences nor do they think they will get into trouble for using them because they are legal. Teens use these drugs because they relieve pain, reduce anxiety, help them sleep and give them the perception of doing better in school and sports. The lack of controls on Internet pharmacies has provided additional access to obtain medications illegally.

To combat the rise in overdoses of opiates (prescription and non-prescription), NYS passed a law in 2006 making it legal for non-medical persons to administer Naloxone to prevent opiate overdoses from becoming fatal. In July 2011, NYS 911 Good Samaritan Law was signed into law. This law is designed to encourage a witness or victim of a substance related emergency to call 911 to save an overdose victim's life. This new policy gives legal amnesty to individuals who are in need of medical treatment resulting from drug use, as well as the individuals who seek help for someone else in need of medical assistance. The law protects both parties from being charged or prosecuted for possession.

Key Facts

- In 2010, about 12 million Americans (age 12 or older) reported nonmedical uses of prescription painkillers in the past year. Overdose deaths have tripled since 1990 and have never been higher. Prescription opioid painkillers cause nearly three out of four prescription drug overdoses. Every year, nearly 15,000 people die from overdoses involving these drugs—more than those who die from heroin and cocaine combined. (Centers for Disease Control CDC)
- 20.2% of high school students have taken prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription. (The 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, NYS OASAS)
- 4.5 million American kids have reported that they have abused prescription drugs. 2.1 million American kids have intentionally abused cough syrup. Half of teens do not see a great risk in abusing prescription (Rx) or over-the-counter (OTC) drugs. 1 in 3 teens report having a close friend who abuses Rx pain relievers to get high. 1 in 4 teens report having a close friend who abuses cough medicine to get high. Only 31% of teens “learn a lot about the risk of drugs” from their parents. Emergency room visits due to abuse of prescription drugs are more than the number of visits due to marijuana and heroin combined. (NYS Department of Health)

Recommendations for PTA

There are a number of actions and programs PTAs can undertake to help prevent and combat prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse.

- **Educate members:** PTAs can provide ongoing up-to-date information about use and abuse of medications including health concerns, dangers, risk factors, and current trends and disseminate information about NYS Department of Health overdose prevention training opportunities. Parents should be encouraged to utilize resources such as community education programs from the Partnership for Drug Free America and obtain appropriate free resources can be obtained from the National Institute on Drug Abuse.
- **Safeguard medications:** Parents need to be aware of what medications are in their home. They need to monitor both the amounts of medications consumed and who is taking these medications. PTAs need to encourage members to keep track of any medications in their home and provide practical resources parents can use.
- **Medication disposal initiatives:** PTAs need to work along with local law enforcement to promote and coordinate safe disposal of medications. The federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) oversees national drug take back initiatives.
- **Coordinate efforts with educators/health providers/pharmacies:** PTA units can work with local educators, health care providers, and pharmacies to promote honest communication about the health and safety issues related to prescription and over the counter drug abuse.

- **Work with legislators:** PTAs can provide a parent perspective to legislators regarding physicians overprescribing medications and pharmacists identifying people who go from pharmacy to pharmacy (pharmacy shop) to fill multiple prescriptions filled for purposes of misuse and selling drugs. PTAs should support the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations for states including to advocate for legislation improving prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs), which are electronic databases that track all prescriptions for painkillers, to identify improper prescribing of painkillers, to address improper patient use of painkillers, to pass, enforce and evaluate pill mill, doctor shopping and other laws to reduce prescription painkiller abuse, to encourage professional licensing boards to take action against inappropriate prescribing and to increase access to substance abuse treatment.

Summary

Over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse has become an epidemic. Teens are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of this abuse. PTAs need to be proactive with education and advocacy as a means of stopping this out of control problem.

Prescription and Over the Counter Drug Abuse Resource List

National

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/Features/VitalSigns/PainkillerOverdoses
www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns

The Partnership at Drugfree.Org

www.drugfree.org

PACT 360: Community Education Programs: Drug Prevention and Early Intervention Education for Parents and Youth

www.pact360.org

The National Institute on Drug Abuse

www.drugabuse.gov
www.nida.nih.gov
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/prescriptiondrugabuse.html

The Drug Enforcement Agency

www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com

National Association of School Nurses (NASN) Smart Moves Smart Choices Program

www.smartmovessmartchoices.org

New York State

New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services

www.oasas.ny.gov
www.oasas.ny.gov/AdMed/rx/index.cfm
www.oasas.ny.gov/publications/pdf/MedicineCabBrochure.pdf

New York State Department of Health

www.health.ny.gov
www.health.ny.gov/publications/1019.pdf
www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/harm_reduction/opioidprevention
www.health.ny.gov/publications/1021.pdf

Adopted 11/11



Position Paper:
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TRAINING AND EVALUATION FOR
TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Background

Family Engagement is a full, equal and equitable partnership among families, educators and community partners to promote children’s learning and development from birth through college and career.

In 2017, The New York State Board of Regents adopted the Next Generation Learning Standards, which are designed to standardize curricula and improve student achievement. The Board of Regents has also approved revisions to the teacher Professional Development Standards that incorporate elements of family engagement and require ongoing training for both teachers and administrators.

Education Law 3012-c requires a performance evaluation system for instructional staff and administrators for school districts and BOCES known as Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). This evaluation system is designed to measure teacher and principal effectiveness in the areas of pupil achievement, educational effectiveness in meeting the NYS teacher or administrator standards, and evidence of family engagement.

Research demonstrates that family engagement in a child’s education improves student achievement and performance, improves attendance, reduces drop-out rates, and improves the emotional and physical well-being of children. These are indicators of school, district, and community effectiveness. Research conducted by Dr. Heather Weiss and the Harvard Family Research Project supports this principle, suggesting that families play a significant role in supporting their child’s learning by advocating for high-quality education and successfully guiding them through a complex school system. Dr. Weiss has developed a definition of effective family engagement that has been adopted by the Family, School and Community National Working Group:

“First, family engagement is a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in meaningful ways and in which families are committed to actively supporting their children’s learning and development.

Second, family engagement is continuous across a child’s life and entails enduring commitment but changing parent roles as children mature into young adulthood.

Third, effective family engagement cuts across and reinforces learning in the multiple settings where children learn at home, in pre-kindergarten programs, in school, in after-school programs, in faith-based institutions, and the community.”

National PTA has stated: “Family engagement in education is a critical strategy for ensuring students’ academic achievement, graduation from high school and overall success in life.” With this in mind, promoting the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships is a top priority for both National and New York State PTA. The National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships provide a framework for strengthening family engagement programs, activities and policies. The National PTA Standards shift the focus from what schools should do to involve families to what families, schools and communities can do together to support student achievement.

The National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships are:

- Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community
- Standard 2: Communicating effectively
- Standard 3: Supporting student success
- Standard 4: Speaking up for every child
- Standard 5: Sharing power
- Standard 6: Collaborating with community

At the federal level, the Family Engagement in Education Act of 2015 (H.R. 1194) provides incentives for schools and districts to engage families to close the achievement gap. Specifically, this legislation is designed to empower communities by increasing Title I funding dedicated to family engagement. It proposes requiring local education agencies to develop and implement standards-based policies and practices for school-family partnerships, create Family Engagement Centers, improve professional development, build national-level capacity, and improve existing laws and funding regarding family engagement.

The NYS PTA affirms and supports the National PTA position.

The Role of NYS PTA

We are at a critical juncture in public education with strong momentum at both state and national levels to increase student achievement and teacher/principal accountability at a time when fiscal support has diminished. Given this reality, NYS PTA strongly supports meaningful, culturally competent family engagement in the process of improving student achievement and success.

Specifically, we must influence the New York State Board of Regents to adopt National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships. NYS PTA, therefore, urges teacher preparation programs to include instruction in meaningful, culturally competent family engagement, particularly the concept of ongoing, two-way school/family communication. NYS PTA also supports family engagement training as a component of ongoing professional development for all teachers and administrators. Regarding APPR, NYS PTA advocates that any future revisions include an evaluative component related to family engagement for all non-tenured and tenured teachers and administrators. Lastly, NYS PTA encourages the New York State Legislature to provide adequate funding for the development and implementation of the revised APPR processes and ongoing professional development.

For more information about the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships and National and NYS PTA programs that promote family-school partnerships, visit www.pta.org or www.nyspta.org. For more information regarding APPR, visit www.nysed.gov or www.nysut.org.

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