



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 2/85
Reaffirmed 11/90
Reaffirmed 8/98
Reaffirmed 8/06

**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

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 July 2015

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>

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:
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.”ⁱ
- 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.”ⁱⁱ
- 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)”ⁱⁱⁱ 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.”^{iv}
- 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^v 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.
- 5) Each student experiences academic challenges and prepares for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.^{vi}

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.”^{vii} 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.”^{viii}

“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.”^{ix} 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.

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

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

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wsec/index.htm>

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

^v <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/>

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

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

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

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

**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 November 2017

**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 July 2015

**Position Paper:
ASSESSMENT, TESTING AND LEARNING**

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Adopted July 2015



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:
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 07/10
Amended 11/17

Position Paper:

PARTNERS FOR HEALTHY LIFESTYLES: NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

THE BASIS

NYS PTA believes that comprehensive school health programs are an essential link in the health education/health care chain. In order to fulfill the responsibility of offering educational opportunities to all children, we need to recognize and deal with their health needs as they impact our schools and communities. Therefore, parents, schools, and communities are encouraged to work together in partnership to provide effective, comprehensive health programs and policies (PTA Position Statement: Health Programs).

THE ISSUES

Many issues impact children’s health including obesity, sedentary lifestyle, poor nutrition, substance use (nicotine, alcohol, drugs, inhalants, etc.), stress, mental illness, poverty, trauma and sports injuries.

Childhood obesity is a complex health issue that occurs when a child is well above the healthy and normal weight for his/her age and height. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 17% of children, about 12.7 million, are obese. From years 2011-2014 among children ages 2-19, obesity affects 1 in 6 children and adolescents in the US. New York State is experiencing a similar epidemic of childhood obesity; a third of New York’s children are obese or overweight (NYS Obesity Statistics).

Factors that may lead to obesity include consuming high calorie, low nutrition foods and beverages; sedentary lifestyles and insufficient physical activity; poor sleep routines; and genetics. Children with obesity are more likely to become adults with obesity, increasing their risk of heart disease, Type 2 Diabetes, liver disease and cancer (CDC Obesity Data, CDC Obesity Causes).

Establishing healthy behaviors among young people has proven more effective than efforts to change unhealthy behaviors already established among adults.

While parents control most food choices in the home and their support encourages their children to be more physically active, schools can play a critical role in modeling healthy behaviors. Research shows that well-designed, well-implemented school programs can effectively promote students’ physical activity and healthy eating.

Food insecurity, a “lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life” according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is also a concern for families. Further, the USDA states that the “consequence of food insecurity, because of prolonged, involuntary lack of food, results in discomfort, illness, weakness or pain that goes beyond the usual uneasy sensation.”

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security.aspx>

According to Feeding America, “in 2015, an estimated 1 in 8 Americans were food insecure, equating to 42 million Americans including 13 million children.”

<https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/understand-food-insecurity/>

WHAT WE NEED TO DO

In supporting parents' efforts to ensure their children's health, school policies and programs:

- Should foster the adoption of healthy diets and age-appropriate physical activity; and
- should provide students with daily physical education and access to safe, appropriate facilities and equipment.

In 2010, the Federal Government and New York State mandated that local schools implement wellness policies, including community involvement (Local School Wellness Policy Summary). One way that parents, school and community can partner is in developing an effective school wellness policy. 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 use factual and science-based curricula to give students the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions and practice healthy behaviors;
- Food available at school is high in vitamins, minerals, and low in fat /trans-fat, sugar, sodium, cholesterol, and calories; reflects science-based nutritional standards for school foods and beverages; and complies with national guidelines for school-aged children;
- Healthy fundraisers are supported and encouraged;
- Physical education and/or sports classes are provided and maintained for all students, grades K-12, according the NYS Education Department regulations (NYSED PE);
- Recommendations for physical activity in the classroom are utilized (<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/classroom-pa.htm>);
- Programs and policies are developed to create safe areas for play, cycling, and walking; and parties promote public awareness of the need for accessible safe recreation opportunities in the community;
- Communities offer a variety of extracurricular activities that enhance student participation and increase opportunities for cooperation among schools, students, parents and community organizations.

NYS PTA has adopted resolutions and positions regarding the following healthy lifestyle issues:

- age-appropriate, science-based standards that are periodically reviewed by health experts
- sufficient time to eat breakfast and lunch
- food or beverages never to be used as incentives or rewards
- additional funding for school meal programs and expansion of the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- a recess period for all elementary school children with no withholding of recess as a 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

Children must hear consistent messages from home and school. Effecting changes in children's dietary habits and patterns of physical activity will require the combined efforts of many stakeholders. As partners in advocacy, parents, educators and community members must teach and model the habits and behaviors of healthy living and must advocate to policy makers 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 and become healthy, active citizens.

Adopted 02/10
Updated 11/17



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:
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
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

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

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.

- 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:
CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN POVERTY: THE PUBLIC SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY

There is a strong correlation between poverty and low student achievement. Children and youth who do poorly in school are less likely to graduate. They are less employable and more apt to perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

1. Children and youth in poverty frequently live in urban or rural areas. Schools with a higher poverty level tend to have lower achievement statistics. These school districts often lack local resources to provide anything more than minimal services for their low achieving student population.
2. Children and youth in poverty often have limited access to educational resources; they are taught in overcrowded, dilapidated surroundings with inequitable access to necessary supplies and technology.
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 and migrant students.

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 policies that protect children and youth from discriminatory discipline or educational placement;
3. Develop and recommend budgets that equitably allocate resources for all programs, across all grade levels, and in all schools within the school district;
4. Set policies that enforce providing information to parents/guardians regarding the educational programs of their children and opportunities for their involvement in the decision-making processes;
5. Develop programs which meet the needs of all students and maintain high expectations for each child;
6. Develop and monitor individual student achievement with sensitivity to individual learning modes and cultural as well as economic backgrounds.

Expect principals to:

1. Structure school settings and encourage teaching staff to address the many different learning needs for every 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/or are educationally disadvantaged;
3. Provide and support opportunities and outreach programs for parents/guardians to understand their responsibilities and be engaged in their children's education;

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 and support student diversity, inclusion, and cultural responsiveness;
4. Communicate with parents/guardians on a regular basis and encourage their engagement.

Encourage parents/guardians to:

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

Call upon legislators to:

1. Provide equitable and adequate distribution of funds, to reduce significant disparities among schools and districts that serve children from poor and lower income families with limited resources.

2. Provide financial incentives to maintain funding for successful programs and maintain the school infrastructure to meet educational program needs;
3. Urge an increase in federal funding to supplement and support state and local intervention programs.

Adopted 11/87
Reaffirmed 11/91
Reaffirmed 02/00
Reaffirmed 08/06
Reaffirmed 07/13
Reaffirmed 02/20



Position Paper: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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, the 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. Early education for young children, especially pre-kindergarten to grade 3, must include social/emotional skills, physical skills, and academics. It is especially important that parents, families, and caregivers be integral parts of the early childhood education program, therefore, a family engagement policy should be part of the required mandates of the Regent's policy on Early Childhood Education.

It is essential to consider the social-emotional component in any policy for early childhood education. Children need to learn communication skills and how to get along with others. We therefore recommend that the policy increase the counseling staff to assist in the development of children's social and emotional skills.

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

NYS PTA advocates for full and stable funding of these programs, professional development for school district staff, and family engagement programs in all school districts.

Important Points to be included within the Regents policy on Early Childhood Education:

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

****Establish universal pre-kindergarten statewide in all public school districts that utilizes research-based strategies in ways that are developmentally appropriate.**

****Establish mandated screening based upon scientific research to determine the needs and goals for each individual child.**

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

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

****Increase support for students with disabilities through early access to inclusive educational settings.**

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

****Expand collaborative efforts by leveraging the resources of community organizations that offer comprehensive social services.**

****Review alignment of State Standards, curriculum, and assessment in pre-kindergarten through grade 3 to determine the extent to which the programs and providers meet the expected standards of quality and to examine intended outcomes.**

****Collaborate with institutions of higher education and other sources to focus on the preparation and training of pre-kindergarten through grade 3 teachers and administrators to be high-quality, culturally-responsive, and linguistically-prepared to serve the developmental and academic needs of young children.**

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

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

Adopted 08/06
Reaffirmed 07/13
Updated 07/24/20

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

In 1975, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act or Public Law 94-142 was passed. This was updated in 1990 and renamed 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. Most recently IDEA was amended through Public Law 114-95, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), in December 2015. Prior to the passage of this federal law, many children with disabilities were excluded from 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 ensure 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.

NYS Education Law Part 200.1, cc. defines Least Restrictive Environment as the placement of students with disabilities in special classes, separate schools or other removal from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that even with the use of supplementary aids and services, education cannot be satisfactorily achieved. The

placement of an individual student with a disability in the least restrictive environment shall: (1) provide the special education needed by the student; (2) provide for education of the student to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the student with other students who do not have disabilities; and (3) be as close as possible to the student's home.

As a result of the least restrictive environment provision in IDEA, two practices have evolved: mainstreaming and inclusion.

Mainstreaming means placing self-contained students into regular classes for most or all of the school day with the expectation that they will be able to maintain similar academic progress with their non-disabled peers. Additional services may be provided by a consultant teacher or by pullout programs. Inclusion means all students, including those with severe disabilities, are provided with 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 society. Inclusion students 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 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
Updated 2/20

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 State Learning Standards for the Arts reflect the educational goals that are common to dance, media, music, theater, and the visual arts while recognizing the distinctiveness of each discipline. All forms of art positively enhance a child's social-emotional health and foster self-expression. Arts education has proven to reduce disciplinary infractions while raising graduation rates, regardless of socio-economic status. The arts are crucial to creating well-rounded students. They help develop many skill sets, such as problem-solving, motor skills, language skills, self-esteem, collaboration, positive risk-taking, enhancing perspective and self-awareness.

These important skills will enable students to achieve success in all phases and subjects of their complete education. The following list emphasizes the artistic processes set by the New York State Education Department, recognizing the importance of a multifaceted arts education, along with the anchor standards that elaborate on the artistic thinking and working processes.

New York State Learning Anchor Standards for the Arts Discipline Areas:

****Kyle to obtain chart from NYSED for ease in communicating these 11 Anchor Standards**

- *Creating - Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.*
 - a. *Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.*
 - b. *Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.*
 - c. *Refine and complete artistic work.*
- *Performing (Music / Dance / Theater) - Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation; Presenting (Visual Arts) - Interpreting and sharing artistic work; Producing (Media Arts) - Realizing and presenting artistic ideas and work.*
 - a. *Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.*
 - b. *Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.*
 - c. *Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.*
- *Responding - Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.*
 - a. *Perceive and analyze artistic work.*
 - b. *Interpret meaning in artistic work.*
 - c. *Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.*
- *Connecting - Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.*
 - a. *Relate and synthesize knowledge and personal experiences to inspire and inform artistic work.*
 - b. *Investigate ways that artistic work is influenced by societal, cultural, and historical context and, in turn, how artistic ideas shape cultures past, present, and future.*

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 ensure a successful outcome for all students. It is important that school districts set curricula that support the goals of the arts and appropriately fund high quality arts programs for all children. 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; in promoting these goals in their instruction.

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

- *Keep consistent communication with local, region and state PTAs;*
- *Send a unified message by building an art advocacy team with other parents/guardians, colleagues, arts councils, museums, university arts faculty, and community members;*
- *Understand the status of arts education in your school, community and state. Become an informed advocate 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;

- *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 Core 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 visual arts, media arts, music, theater and dance teachers.*

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

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

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December 11, 2017 (Albany) – We are highly pleased that the State Education Department has recognized that we need more and different pathways to graduations and success for our students.

Today's announcement that the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential can be used to seek a superintendent determination for graduation is a big step forward for many of our students with disabilities.

"This is a great step forward to ensuring each and every child receives a meaningful diploma option that leads to a successful career or college experience," Gracemarie Rozea, President of NYS PTA, offered.

"We look forward to working with our state education department and other stakeholders to make every child's potential a reality, and are pleased to see this movement forward to support ALL children," added Kyle Belokopitsky, Executive Director of NYS PTA.

NYS PTA will comment in favor of this regulation, and hopes that the final regulation and future work on this issue continues to support children.

[Find the full message from the State Education Department here.](#)



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 should use the 3 to 1 rule. For every fundraising activity, there should be at least three non-fundraising projects aimed at helping parents and children or others advocating for school improvements." 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.

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.

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, State and Region PTAs through attendance at trainings, workshops, conferences, and conventions and through the use of national and state publications. PTA funds are expected to be used to strengthen the PTA.

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 PTA unit or council should plan to raise the difference between the income from the local portion of membership dues and the proposed expenditures.

The following questions may be used as guidelines in selecting and planning fundraising projects:

1. *Does this fundraiser align with the PTA mission and purpose?*

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

2. *Does it conform to the noncommercial, nonsectarian and nonpartisan policies stated in your bylaws? 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). Check the reputation of fundraising vendors or companies before signing any contract.*

3. *Are there local, state, or federal laws, and/or State Education Department regulations that 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. If in doubt, it might be well for a PTA to discuss the proposed fundraising project with appropriate PTA region board members and local officials. *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.**

4. *Does the program rely on the participation of adults, avoiding asking children to sell to others without adult supervision?*

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 schoolwork or a constructive leisure time activity. **PTA must not exploit children.**

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

For example, does it encourage healthy lifestyles, physical activity or positive attitudes?

6. *Are regulations with regard to fire laws and safety precautions strictly observed?*

Prior to the event all safety factors such as maximum capacity, fire exits, accessibility for the handicapped, etc., should be reviewed and adhered to during the event.

7. *Is it a conflict of interest? Does it violate 501c3 regulations?*

Care must be taken to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest (e.g. the company is owned by a PTA leader or a profit will be made by a PTA leader)

8. *Is there a budget of all associated expenditures as required by the PTA's bylaws and procedures?* All anticipated expenses (e.g. materials and advertising for the event) must be approved.

Corporate/Business Sponsorships

Sponsorship means that a for-profit company provides cash, products or expertise to a PTA in return for public acknowledgement. Care must be taken to ensure that the benefits given back to the sponsor fall within IRS guidelines for a 501c3 organization. **Sponsorship or in-kind donations cannot be accepted or solicited from companies that manufacture or sell products or take public positions inconsistent with National or NYS PTA's positions and resolutions (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarette or firearm companies).** Gifts and/or incentives from a partner or sponsor should not be given to any individual in consideration of a sponsorship or partnership.

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. The purchasing of school equipment and the payment of school staff salaries are the responsibility of school administration and school boards.

PTA efforts 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.

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.

Special Note regarding games of chance: Fundraisers involving games of chance (e.g., raffles, bingo, casino night, night at the races) require special consideration. They may require permits and be subject to taxation. Failure to abide by the regulations could cause your PTA to lose its tax-exempt status. (Refer to the NYSPTA Resource Guide for further information.)

Adopted 11/84
Reaffirmed 11/90
Reaffirmed 08/98
Reaffirmed 08/06
Reaffirmed 07/13
Reaffirmed 02/20

New York State



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Position Paper:

**GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION OF TEXTBOOKS AND
EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL**

Whether selecting or evaluating textbooks, library and instructional material, or classroom resources, a well-written, well-communicated school board policy based on input from all constituents is key. Parents, families, and PTA members may be asked to participate in committees creating or reviewing board policies for the selection of instructional materials. Those who participate in a 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 Material Selection Policy

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

Suggestions for developing a selection and review of instructional material 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 material 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, families, and students to develop the policy;
2. Once the committee makes a report, comments should be sought from key implementers such as department chairs, established curriculum committees, teachers' associations, 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 school district staff and community members. The school administration will implement and evaluate the policy, and if necessary, recommend future revisions in collaboration with school district staff, parents, families, and community members. The Board of Education should periodically call for input and review the policy as needed.

The components of a material 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 material, periodicals, reading material, records, online instructional material/technology, media, and supplementary material.
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 including as students, parents, families, 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 content, and the procedure for handling challenged material.

The criteria for evaluating and selecting material should include:

1. the quality of the material (artistic, library, etc);
2. the appropriateness to the academic, social, age and developmental level of the user;
3. the sensitivity in the treatment of controversial issues;
4. the ability to stimulate intellectual and social development;
5. the inclusion of culturally responsive instructional material.

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

The process or procedure for challenging or questioning material, which is a parent's or family's right, should clearly outline:

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

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
Updated 07/24/20

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

Background

Past federal and state mandates forced high-stakes educational decisions based on the results of student assessments. As a consequence, the focus of student assessment has tipped toward high-stakes testing and test prep in core subjects such as math and English language arts. Such measures, resulted in sanctions on school buildings and districts failing to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and now districts will face continued intervention under the new federal law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The response at the school district level has often been to reduce or eliminate instructional time in so called “noncore” 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 developmentally appropriate 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. However, standardized assessments should be limited in duration, developmentally appropriate, and solely used for diagnostic purposes.

Unfortunately, our current grades 3-8 state assessments are not developmentally appropriate or limited in duration. We continued to call for a full review of these assessments, and a reduction from two days to one day, for both math and ELA state assessments.

The 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, families, educators, and policymakers have raised concerns that the 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 previous 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 employment decisions, less meaningful family engagement and the development of an adversarial climate between parents and schools due to the 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 student assessment and teacher and principal evaluations. The basis for student, teacher or principal evaluation should be reliable and valid and include multiple measures. However, an overemphasis on high-stakes testing is detrimental to students and the education process.

- We support continued development and implementation of high-quality, developmentally appropriate learning standards, and efforts by state and local education agencies to improve learning based on these standards. We continue to oppose any relationship between state assessments and Annual Professional Performance Review;
- 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 the application

of learned skills to real-life situations. Student learning should always be driven by developmentally appropriate standards and locally developed 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 high-needs 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 continues to fully support 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 the level of instruction rather than factors such as chronological age;
- We support a collaborative and supportive evaluation system for educators (APPR), with the goal of improving teaching and learning to benefit students and educators. We strongly support an emphasis on meaningful observation of instruction and review of non-test and authentic measures of performance that focus on teacher support and mentorship;
- We continue to fully oppose any public release of teacher or principal APPR data;
- While we understand that valid, limited in duration, well-constructed and developmentally appropriate assessments may be used to inform instruction, NYS PTA strongly supports a parent and family's right to make informed educational decisions for their children, which includes decisions around their child's participation in state assessments. It is a parent and family's right to decide whether or not their child sits for standardized assessments; and
- Further, NYS PTA fully opposes any negative consequences for educators or school leaders, or mandates for intervention for schools based on a parental right or decision.

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 high-quality learning standards and the academic challenge needed to compete in a global society. We also support the need for meaningful, developmentally, appropriate, limited and diagnostic student assessment and educator accountability. Unfortunately, current trends 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

Updated 02/20