



NYS PTA BOARD OF MANAGERS STATEMENT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

The New York State PTA Board of Managers (NYS PTA) periodically approves position statements that deal with issues, policies, and practices that promote education and the welfare of children and youth in home, school and community. These statements are aligned with the organization's belief that every child deserves excellence in education and in quality of life. In addition, these statements align with positions approved by our membership and documented in the NYS PTA official document entitled "Where We Stand".

NYS PTA members agree that all children and youth should have an equal opportunity to develop to their fullest potential. This may include the development of new standards based curriculum programs through all levels. NYS PTA would like to see the addition of foreign language study to the curriculum for young children, and believes that it would be a motivation for future study of languages and cultures, which seems increasingly necessary in this global society, and it would also increase reading skills overall.

Recently, the federal government has proposed an expansion of foreign language programs aimed at involving children in courses as early as kindergarten and also the increase of opportunities for foreign language instruction for students in college and graduate school. As NYS PTA believes there should be no new unfunded mandates, we support advocacy efforts to insure that adequate funding is supplied by both the federal government and New York State to cover this new initiative.

NYS PTA also encourages that appropriate levels of funding for multimedia materials, technology development and books to be provided in every classroom to aid with this new instruction. Additionally, as in all subject areas, highly qualified staff should be in every foreign language classroom.

NYS PTA promotes and supports developmentally appropriate programs, and therefore promotes that the subject of foreign language have no required standardized testing mandated in this new area of instruction.

NYS PTA also supports the development of parent education programs to support learning at home. Involving parents in the decisions on what languages to offer at this level can also encourage a more comprehensive approach to a satisfactory long-term study of language.

NYS PTA believes that all children deserve the opportunity to receive an excellent and equitable education that prepares them to have a career of choice and be successful in the future. We believe that this opportunity begins with early childhood education that is available for all children equally, and further, that early childhood education should include foreign language instruction and education.