

Basic Policy 2016-17

New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. is a nonpartisan organization and is concerned with the education, the care, and the protection of children and youth. Positions will conform to policies adopted by National PTA and New York State PTA and will provide the basis for PTA advocacy efforts. This policy represents all resolutions as found in “Where We Stand” and other documents.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

- a) Encourage prevention, education and treatment efforts regarding alcohol and other drugs.
- b) Support measures to eliminate herbal smoking products, tobacco and nicotine use among children and youth.

Citizenship and Equality of Opportunity

- a) Encourage respect for all members of the community and their property.
- b) Encourage fair housing policies with regard to children and their families.
- c) Encourage appropriate care, treatment, and opportunity for all children and their families.
- d) Guarantee that all children and youth with special needs receive equitable access to educational programs, services and opportunities.

Cooperative Role of Parents/Families and Educational Professionals

- a) Encourage parents and families to be informed of and involved in the decision-making process at the local, county, and state levels.
- b) Ensure the accountability of public schools by maximizing citizen involvement.
- c) Encourage cooperation among school districts through regional approaches toward resolving mutual concerns.
- d) Support the inclusion of family engagement provisions in federal and state legislation, policies, regulations, and official proclamations/executive orders, with dedicated funding.

Cultural Arts

- a) Advocate for and promote arts education programs as part of the core curriculum.
- b) Encourage integration of the arts in school curricula.
- c) Promote public awareness of the lifelong value of the arts.

Early Childhood Education

- a) Promote and support developmentally appropriate preschool and kindergarten programs with sustained equitable support.
- b) Encourage the use of developmentally appropriate alternative means of assessment for children, preschool through grade 2.

Education Emphasis

- a) Guarantee for all children and youth (pre-K through post-secondary) an equal opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.
- b) Promote implementation of high standards and developmentally appropriate assessment for all levels of public education.
- c) Ensure students’ opportunities for academic, vocational and technical education through the post-secondary level.
- d) Ensure identification, notification and education of all special education students, including gifted and talented.
- e) Promote full access to education for migrant and/or homeless children and youth, including those emancipated.

Environment

- a) Insist that all school property be environmentally safe and provide a healthy learning environment.
- b) Insist that all members of the school community have a “right to know” about environmental health issues and hazards in their school environment.
- c) Encourage schools and communities to model environmentally responsible behavior.
- d) Promote awareness of the impact of potentially hazardous substances.

Financial Support for Public Education

- a) Ensure that federal, state and local funds designated for elementary and secondary education are used only for public schools.
- b) Support adequate, equitable and predictable funding for public education that is budgeted and distributed to ensure stability for the orderly operation of schools.
- c) Support and encourage that state aid be provided at a minimum of 50% of total educational costs, exclusive of federal or other sources of aid.

Health

- a) Support comprehensive health, wellness and safety education.
- b) Promote the accessibility of comprehensive physical and mental health services in school and community.
- c) Promote and collaborate on wellness initiatives within the school and community.
- d) Promote building healthy lifestyles through daily physical activity and nutrition.
- e) Encourage proper labeling of consumer goods.
- f) Promote quality age-appropriate nutrition programs and standards based on scientific evidence.
- g) Urge that the food supply be grown and produced free of harmful substances without the overuse or misuse of drugs, including but not limited to antibiotics.
- h) Promote, for youth and young adults, education on Health Care Privacy laws.

Juvenile Protection

- a) Promote improvement of juvenile justice and court facilities, educational conditions, personnel and procedures that deal with at-risk youth, including delinquent, neglected and abused children.
- b) Support services and programs that provide assistance to families in stress/crisis situations.
- c) Seek and support the provision of safe care and educational opportunities for children in all environments.
- d) Seek and support the protection of children from the threats of negative influences.

Libraries, Media, and Technology

- a) Encourage the establishment of school district policies formulated with family, school and community members for the selection and/or review of multimedia materials.
- b) Encourage establishment of guidelines to develop procedures to deal with challenges to educational materials.
- c) Encourage broadcasters to air appropriate programming for children and youth.
- d) Encourage understanding and awareness of media literacy.
- e) Encourage awareness and understanding of what is available/accessible to children and youth through the use of technology.
- f) Support and encourage funding for libraries, media and technology to facilitate the implementation of high learning standards and foster student achievement.

Parent and Family Life

- a) Promote parent and family education programs.
- b) Provide parents and families with the necessary knowledge and skills to act as advocates for children.
- c) Promote family and community engagement best practices.

PTA Organizational Decisions

- a) Ensure that PTA funds are used to advance the purposes and goals of PTA, not to fill gaps in school budgets.
- b) Encourage and support training of all PTA members.

Religious Expression in Public Schools

- a) Ensure that the public school approach to religion is consistent with the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution, addressing the separation of church and state.

Safety

- a) Ensure the safety of children in the school environment.
- b) Ensure safe infrastructure, modes of transportation and safe routes to/from school.
- c) Encourage safe conditions in the home and community.
- d) Secure appropriate measures to prevent the incidence of missing and abused children.
- e) Promote awareness and elimination of hazards and risks, in both real and virtual worlds, to children and youth.