



2016-2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

New York State PTA advocates for all children and youth from birth through post-secondary education.

Legislative Priorities, adopted by the NYS PTA Board of Directors at the annual pre-Convention meeting, list our annual advocacy priorities. Legislative Priorities may be amended by the NYS PTA Board of Directors as social conditions and government policies necessitate additional response and action.

NYS PTA's 2016-2017 Legislative Priorities are:

Support for Public Education:

- Support funding and reforms that provide equal access to high quality education, delivered by highly qualified staff, and prepares all children for college, career and citizenry;
- Oppose funding limits such as the tax cap and supermajority vote that disregard uncontrollable school cost drivers, create greater educational inequities, and limit local determination of educational opportunity;
- Support legislation that would change the method of funding charter schools to eliminate any adverse impact on existing school districts and ensure charter school accountability;
- Support legislation that responds to the needs of struggling schools with adequate resources and research based solutions;
- Oppose the diversion of public funds from public schools for vouchers and tuition tax credits;
- Support fiscal independence for the Big Five (5) school districts;
- Support adequate funding for school districts to provide continuing professional development for educators, especially when learning standards or assessment forms change;
- Support adequate, predictable and equitable funding for all school districts that included continued funding for maintenance and modernization of school facilities, and funding for general school operations that honors past funding commitments;
- Support full funding for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and all other federal laws affecting the education of children and youth in New York State;
- Support mandate for full day kindergarten in New York State and adequate, equitable and assured funding for pre-K and full day kindergarten;
- Support efforts to maintain optimal class size for instruction at all levels;
- Urge the NYS Education Department (SED) to offer an additional standards-based diploma for all students who cannot successfully fulfill Regents requirements;

Safe and Nurturing Environments:

- Support healthy children and youth initiatives, including those addressing mental, emotional and physical health needs and substance abuse issues;
- Support initiatives that foster a supportive school climate;
- Support policies and initiatives that engage home, school and community in violence prevention planning and measures;
- Support quality, affordable, accessible school-based before-school and after-school programs;
- Support initiatives to require the use of seat belts on all school buses;
- Advocate for improved child nutrition, including prevention of obesity and eating disorders, and healthful levels of physical activity;
- Support legislation, policies and regulations that protect children and youth when using the Internet, wireless devices and other forms of electronic communications, and the use of their personal data;
- Support initiatives that foster a school environment free of toxic substances;
- Support legislation to raise the age of criminal responsibility in New York State to eighteen;
- Support legislation, policies and regulations that minimize student exposure to dangers posed by multilane highways and bus stop locations;
- Supports legislation that regulates the manufacture, marketing and use of electronic cigarettes.

Parent and Family Engagement:

- Support the adoption of the National Standards and Assessment for Family School Partnerships and the recommendations of the NYS Family Engagement Coalition;
- Support representation of NYS PTA as one of the parent voices on statewide interagency parent and family cabinets/councils;
- Support the development of effective parent and family engagement plans in every school using a reportable accountability system.