

Virtual Lobby Day

March 8, 2016



Funding Our
Schools

Family and
Community Engagement

Early Childhood
Education

Heroin and
Prescription
Opiates/Opioids

ADVOCACY ALERT



March is PTA Advocacy Month

- Issues Brief: Funding Our Schools**
- Issues Brief: Family and Community Engagement**
- Issues Brief: Early Childhood Education**
- Issues Brief: Heroin and Prescription Opiates/ Opioids**

Governor Cuomo 2016 agenda is “Built to Lead” and calls upon “New York’s inherent capacity to lead the nation in addressing some of today’s most pressing challenges.”

In order to accomplish either, we must urge the Governor and legislature to:

- **honor past commitments and adequately fund programs it expects school districts to make available to all children in New York State**
- **support and fund family engagement initiatives**
- **fully fund and support early childhood education initiatives**
- **fully fund and implement heroin and prescription opiates/opioids treatment and prevention initiatives**

Our campaign is two-fold: a letter/postcard writing initiative and a Virtual Lobby Day.

Please, write letters and/or postcards to your representatives in Albany. You can use the attached information in a letter or postcard format, or create your own using the issue brief/talking points included. Letters should be sent to all those listed on the reverse side, and your local area representatives. Have members sign several copies at your meetings, and send them all in one envelope. The postcard included should be duplicated on postcard sheets available at local office supply stores (remember to put on a stamp). Duplicate a batch and have members sign at your next meeting! Send out letters/postcards more than once. *The more Albany hears from us, the stronger our message becomes.*

Virtual Lobby Day is *Tuesday, March 8*. On that day we are asking all members to call, email and/or fax their legislators. Tell them you support full funding for public schools and want to see restoration of education support. Contact all legislators listed, as well as your local representatives. *We need thousands of voices to ensure our message is heard.*

Together we can send a powerful message to Albany to:

- **require a minimum \$2.2 billion school aid increase to ensure educational equity and to meet state expectations**
- **support Regents requests to fund family engagement efforts**
- **keep Pre-K with NYSED. Predictably fund early education in NYS**
- **support NYS PTA initiatives to improve response to opiate/opioid abuse**

In addition to contacting your local representatives, please also contact:

Governor Andrew Cuomo

Executive Chamber
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224
518-474-8390
@NYGovCuomo
www.governor.ny.gov/contact

Senator John J. Flanagan

Senate Majority Leader
Room 330, State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12247
Phone: 518-455-2071
@NYSenate
Flanagan@nysenate.gov

Assemblyman Carl E. Heastie

Speaker
Legislative Office Building, Room 522
Albany, NY 12248
518-455-3791
@NYSA_Majority
speaker@assembly.state.ny.us

Senator Carl L. Marcellino

Education Chair
188 State Street
Room 811, Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247
Phone: (518) 455-2390
@Senator98
marcelli@senate.state.ny.us

Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan

Chair of the Assembly Education Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 836
Albany, NY 12248
518-455-4851
nolanc@assembly.state.ny.us

NYS Assembly website: www.assembly.state.ny.us

@NYSA_Majority, @NYS_AM

NYS Senate website: www.nysenate.gov

@NYSenate

2016 Issues Brief: Funding Our Schools

The 2016-17 NYS Executive budget proposals is a study in contrasts. Absent is the negative rhetoric that characterized last year's proposals. This year's budget is also introduced in a climate where new federal legislation, proposed Regents regulations and recommendations from the Governor's Common Core Task Force have introduced the promise of flexibility into the discussion of education reform. At the same time, funding of schools and the education department is insufficient. For the past eight years districts have filled gaps in state aid during a period of economic downturn in the state budget through program reduction and reserves depletion. With an improved economy and budget surplus, legislative priorities must turn to reimbursing districts for lost aid, demonstrating progress in honoring past commitments and supporting existing programs and regulations with adequate and equitable funding. NYS PTA maintains that a minimum increase of \$2.2 billion in local aid to schools will be necessary to address these priorities. Increased support and staffing essential to supporting education department leadership is also required. We seek support for proposals offered by the NYS Board of Regents, the NYS Educational Conference Board and NYS PTA that would:

- **Recognize the Impact of near Zero Tax Cap.** If the state's priority is to maintain the property tax cap, we believe the state has a responsibility to fund the \$700 million gap the calculated cap and the 2% limit generally understood by the public.
- **Assure Equity in Aid Distribution.** The GEA needs to be eliminated but high needs districts must be assured of equal percentage increases in foundation aid.
- **De-link APPR from State Aid.** The moratorium on use of test scores in APPR must be accompanied by a moratorium on state aid penalties until implementation stabilizes.
- **Supplement Support for Community Schools.** NYS PTA supports the \$100 million Executive proposal to create community schools but the funding is neither sufficient nor predictable. Grant funds need to be supplemented with accelerated phase-in of foundation aid in districts with struggling schools.
- **Support Unfunded Initiatives.** Professional development, multiple pathways to HS graduation and services for English Language Learners (ELLs) are all essential but without state funding, require districts to make choices between being out of compliance or cutting other programs.
- **Reject Education Tax Credits.** Tax Credit proposals divert funding from current commitments and should be considered only AFTER public schools are adequately and equitably funded.
- **Reject STAR Rebate proposals:** Proposed STAR rebate initiatives are likely to create confusion which is likely to result in school budget defeats.
- **Assure Adequate Support for State Education Department Operations:** Without adequate staff and budget, expectations of the education department are unrealistic. They also diminish the effectiveness of local initiatives supported with state aid and local tax dollars.

Now that the state has moved from coping with deficits to reporting annual surpluses, its first commitment needs to be to honor past commitments and adequately fund programs it expects school districts to make available to all the children of New York State.

Talking Points: Funding Our Schools

- **Recognize the Impact of near Zero Tax Cap.** Foundation aid must be increased by \$700 million to cover the difference between zero tax cap and a 2% tax increase.
- **Assure Equity in Aid Distribution.** The GEA must be eliminated and high needs districts must be assured a proportional foundation aid increase.
- **De-link APPR from State Aid.** State aid increases must not be held hostage to SED approval of APPR agreements.
- **Supplement support for Community Schools.** NYS PTA supports the Governor's \$100 million proposal to create community schools. Grant funds need to be supplemented with accelerated phase-in of foundation aid.
- **Support Unfunded Initiatives.** Professional development, multiple pathways to HS graduation and services for English Language Learners (ELLs) are all essential but without state funding, require districts to make choices between being out of compliance or cutting other programs.
- **Reject Education Tax Credits.** Tax Credit proposals divert funding from public schools and should be considered only AFTER public schools are adequately and equitably funded.
- **Reject STAR Rebate changes.** Proposed STAR rebate changes are likely to cause confusion that result in school budget defeats.
- **Assure adequate support for State Education Department Operations.** Current expectations of the education department are unrealistic due to inadequate staffing and budget.

2016 Issues Brief: Family and Community Engagement

National research consistently highlights family engagement as critical to student success. Collaborative family-school partnerships are essential for economically and culturally diverse communities where achievement gaps are most severe. Additionally, family engagement is identified as one of the most important strategies for improving teacher effectiveness and retention. Yet, teachers often lack training and skills to effectively engage diverse families and new teachers felt least prepared for the task of engaging families in student learning. Lately, the media has been actively following the growing parent frustration with multiple and confusing changes in New York schools. Effective family collaboration requires the development of clear two-way communication capacity between policymakers, parents and communities. Federal legislation and state policy requires parent and community outreach however, the lack of dedicated funding over the past eight years make this a challenging goal.

Currently, we have no dedicated NYS Education Department office to actively support family and community engagement. Both the NYS Board of Regents and Education Department staff recognize, through their official two year budget request, that family and community engagement improvements are essential.

Since 2008, NYS PTA working with the research-based National PTA Family School Partnership Standards, co-sponsored three years of *"On the Same Page Summit"*, engaging over 120 educators, parents, and support agencies in generating recommendations to improve family and community engagement in New York. As founding members of the NYS Family Engagement Coalition, the nation's first, we continue to advance family engagement through research, advocacy and sharing of best practices.

With Governor Cuomo's announcement of budget surpluses, NOW is the time to take real potential of family/school partnerships seriously. NYS PTA and the NYS Family Engagement Coalition (NYSFEC) support the establishment of an Office of Family and Community Engagement. We further urge the adoption of standards-based family engagement activities that bring educators and families together through pre-service and in-service training in research-based, culturally responsive practices.

NYS PTA urges the legislature and Governor to support family engagement initiatives by funding proposals that would:

- Fund the NYS Regents proposal to create Office of Family and Community Engagement within the NYS Education Department
- Support the NYS Education Department request for \$25 million in 2016 and \$50 million in 2017-2018 to implement school community partnerships
- Adopt a standards-based family engagement model, ideally the National Standards for Family School Partnerships to:
 - support the integral role of families as supporters, encouragers, monitors, models, advocates, decision-makers and collaborators with educators and schools;
 - engage educators, through pre-service and in-service training, in research-based culturally responsive family engagement practices;
 - effectively communicate initiatives to improve student outcomes for example, attendance, behaviors and student achievement;

build opportunities around school/community collaboration including academics, social/emotional/physical/mental health, job training/career planning, youth engagement and family education/support.

Talking Points: Family and Community Engagement

In spite of extensive research demonstrating the value of family/school partnerships in closing the achievement gap, in New York, we lack a dedicated Office of Family/Community Engagement in our State Education Department. The 2016 Board of Regents/State Education Department budget request seeks to respond to the growing family and community frustrations by staffing a dedicated office responsible for the coordination and collaboration on family and community engagement efforts. The lack of dedicated funding challenges this priority. NYS PTA supports NYS Board of Regents requests that would:

- Fund the NYS Regents proposal to create and staff an Office of Family and Community Engagement within the SED
- Support the NYS Education Department request for \$25 million in 2016 and \$50 million in 2017-2018 to implement school community partnerships
- Adopt a standards-based family engagement model, ideally the National Standards for Family School Partnerships to:
 - support the integral role of families as supporters, encouragers, monitors, models, advocates, decision-makers and collaborators with educators and schools;
 - engage educators, through pre-service and in-service training, in research-based culturally responsive family engagement practices;
 - effectively communicate initiatives to improve student outcomes for example, attendance, behaviors and student achievement;
 - build opportunities around school/community collaboration including academics, social/emotional/physical/mental health, job training/career planning, youth engagement and family education/support.

2016 Issues Brief: Early Childhood Education

The NYS PTA believes that all children should have complete and equal access to pre-school educational opportunities. Education for young children should be designed and overseen around standards adopted by the NYS Board of Regents and NYS Education Department. Pre-school must include attention to the unique developmental nature of the social/emotional, physical and academic experiences of young children that address the needs of whole child learning. Furthermore, parents and guardians must be an integral part of the early childhood education experience.

Implementation of quality programming that assures such opportunities requires consistent standards that flow seamlessly from pre-kindergarten through early elementary grades. Success likewise requires consistency in program structure, research-based strategies that are age and developmentally appropriate, access to well-trained professionals and funding that is adequate, predictable and equitable. In responding to these aspirations, we offer the following recommendations:

- **Establish Universal Pre-kindergarten statewide in all public school districts.** Funding should be available to provide access to all children with optional participation. Program funding should be predictable and based on the same state aid distribution models that support kindergarten through grade twelve programs.
- **Require Full Day Kindergarten.** NYS PTA proposes that all districts provide a full day kindergarten program. NYS PTA recognizes, however, that some children may require a part time transition period to adjust to a full day program and proposes a process under which such children may enter on a part time basis, later converting to a full time program.
- **Support NYS Board of Regents and Education Department oversight of kindergarten and pre-kindergarten programs.** The 2016 Executive budget proposes to consolidate and streamline pre-kindergarten programs by creating a new, politically appointed board to oversee pre-kindergarten programs. While NYS PTA agrees with the governor that it is time to consolidate and streamline pre-kindergarten programs, we also maintain that the educational integrity of such programs must not be subject to the political influence suggested in the Executive Budget. Effectiveness and consistency with K-12 programming demand that educational responsibility for pre-kindergarten reside in the education department.

Talking Points: Early Childhood Education

The NYS PTA believes that all children should have complete and equal access to educational opportunities. Early education for young children from three to eight years of age should be built around standards adopted by the NYS Board of Regents. We propose:

- **Charge the NYS Board of Regents and Education Department with oversight of all pre-school education, assuring consistent education p-20.**
- **Adopt predictable Universal Pre-kindergarten funding statewide in all public schools that includes trained educators, adequate curriculum, support staff, transportation and parent engagement.** Grant funding for pre-school is unpredictable and insufficient to support UPK for all. Pre- kindergarten education support will be compromised without consistent formula-based funding.
- **Require and support full day kindergarten**

2016 Issues Brief: Heroin and Prescription Opiates/ Opioids

Heroin and Prescription Opiates are devastating families and communities across New York State. The family tragedies are overwhelming. Young people age 25 and under are particularly impacted. Even with advances in health insurance parity laws requiring substance abuse services to be covered in similar ways to other diseases, those suffering from addiction, along with their families, have an extremely difficult time accessing treatment services in a timely manner. Although regulations for the use of opiate overdose reversal medication, Naloxone/ Narcan, have been changed to allow greater access to this lifesaving tool, there are still institutional barriers to full implementation of this policy.

According to the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), “nearly half of young people who inject heroin report abusing prescription painkillers before starting heroin. From July 2013 to June of 2014, there were 238,000 admissions to OASAS programs. For those admissions, 32% identified heroin and other opioids as the primary abused substance. Over the last ten years there has been a 126% increase in admissions among young people who abuse opiates. Young adults, age 18 to 24, had the largest increase in admissions during this time. Between 2005 -2014 heroin treatment admissions among upstate New York residents increased by 115% and admissions in Long Island increased by 116%. Approximately 8,500 admissions were for individuals under 18, with 6% identifying heroin and opiates as the primary abused substance.”

To these ends, we propose:

- **Fund the Governor’s proposal of \$616 million in All Funds appropriations to the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) including:**
 - **Allocation of \$141 million to address the growing heroin and opiate epidemic:** This funding will support the creation of local recovery support services such as Recovery Community Centers, Recovery Coaches, Family Recovery Navigators, Adolescent Clubhouses, Treatment Availability Tool, Kitchen Table Toolkit and Talk2Prevent. According to the OASAS Treatment Insurance Work Group report from December 2015, patients and their families struggle to navigate the current treatment system and understand their insurance benefit requirements. This issue impedes access to a smooth continuum of care from one level of treatment to another. For young people in particular, this care is crucial because if a person who has stopped using heroin and other opioid relapses, the risks of overdose increase significantly. When people go into a hospital emergency department, those whose overdoses were reversed often do not receive a substance use disorder assessment or a linkage to care.
 - **Full implementation of the NYS OASAS Residential Redesign:** According to NYS OASAS, “this will create flexibility within the system to allow providers to serve individuals in need of short-term and long-term treatment as they de-tox from heroin and prescription painkillers.”
- **Approve A-355–S4348, Mandatory addiction and recovery education for physicians:** The Assembly must pass A-355. The Senate passed companion bill, S4348. The Governor must then sign into law. It authorizes the commissioner of health to establish standards, and review and implement requirements for physicians to receive continuing medical education on pain management, palliative care and addiction.

Increase access to opiate overdose reversal medication, Naloxone/ Narcan, in schools: In 2015, Education and Public Health Laws were amended to allow schools to provide and maintain overdose reversal medications. Furthermore, registered nurses in schools are now authorized to administer opioid-related overdose treatment pursuant to a non-patient specific order and protocol prescribed by a licensed physician or a certified nurse practitioner. Schools, however, are slow to implement this policy due to lack of understanding of the legal changes regarding liability. All schools must have this lifesaving medication on-site and staff must be trained to recognize and intervene in the event of an opiate overdose.

Talking Points: Heroin and Prescription Opiates/ Opioids

- **Support the Governor's \$616 million proposal to fund the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) including:**
 - **\$141 million to address the growing heroin and opiate epidemic:**
 - **Full implementation of the NYS OASAS Residential Redesign**
 - Creation of local recovery support services
 - Assistance with navigating current treatment systems and understanding insurance benefits
 - Linkage of emergency room treatment to further care based on a substance abuse disorder assessment
- **The Assembly must pass A-355, Mandatory addiction and recovery education for physicians bill:** the Senate passed companion bill, S4348. The Governor must then sign into law. It authorizes the commissioner of health to establish standards, and review and implement requirements for physicians to receive continuing medical education on pain management, palliative care and addiction.
- **Require all schools to have Naloxone/ Narcan on-site, with nurses and staff trained in opiate overdose reversal.** All schools must have this lifesaving medication on site and their staff must be trained to recognize and intervene in the event of an opioid overdose

Dear _____,

Date _____

FUNDING OUR SCHOOLS

We urge you to adopt a 2016 state aid increase of at least \$2.2 billion that would:

- Recognize the impact of a near zero Tax Cap
- Eliminate the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) while assuring low wealth districts will receive proportional state aid increases
- De-Link APPR approval from eligibility for state aid increases
- Supplement support for Community schools
- Increase funding for professional development, multiple pathways to High School graduation and services to English Language Learners
- Assure adequate support for State Education Department Operations

We further urge you to:

- Reject Education Tax Credit proposals that divert funds from public schools
- Reject proposals to cap STAR exemptions or alter the manner in which they are applied

Twitter: @NYSenate @NYSA_Majority @NYS_AM Require a min. \$2.2B school aid increase to ensure educational equity to meet expectations

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____



Dear _____,

Date _____

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We urge you to support program and budget requests that would: Fund the Regents proposal to create and staff an Office of Family and Community Engagement within the NYSED

- Fund the NYSED request for \$25 million in 2016 and \$50 million in 2017 to implement school community partnerships
- Adopt a standards-based family engagement model, ideally the National Standards for Family School Partnerships to:
 - support the integral role of families as supporters, encouragers, monitors, models, advocates, decision-makers and collaborators with educators and schools;
 - engage educators, through pre-service and in-service training, in research-based culturally responsive family engagement practices;
 - effectively communicate initiatives to improve attendance, behaviors and student achievement outcomes;
 - build opportunities around school/community collaboration including academics, social/emotional/physical/mental health, job training/career planning, youth engagement and family education/support

Twitter: @NYSenate @NYSA_Majority @NYS_AM Support Regents requests to fund family engagement efforts

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____





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Dear _____,

Date _____

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

We urge you to reject the governor’s proposal to create a politically appointed Empire State Pre-Kindergarten Grant Board with staffing through the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. Current and proposed grant-based programs should be consolidated and replaced with predictable, formula-based funding that assures consistent and effective early childhood programming overseen by the NYS Education Department from pre-kindergarten through at least grade two.

**Twitter: @NYSenate @NYSA_Majority @NYS_AM Keep Pre-K with NYSED.
Predictably fund early education in NYS**

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____



Dear _____,

Date _____

HEROIN AND PRESCRIPTION OPIATES/ OPIOIDS

Heroin and Prescription Opiates/ Opioids are devastating communities across New York State. Please support the following actions:

- Approve the Governor’s \$616 million proposal to fund the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS);
- Ask the Assembly to pass A-355 authorizing the commissioner of health to implement physician continuing education requirements for pain management, palliative care and addiction. The Governor must then sign into law.
- Require all schools to have Naloxone/ Narcan on-site, with nurses and staff trained in opiate overdose reversal.

Twitter message: @NYSenate @NYSA_Majority @NYS_AM Support NYS PTA initiatives to improve response to opiate/opioid abuse

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____





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