

WHERE WE STAND

2011

THE BASIS FOR *ACTION*



Where We Stand is the official ***position*** document of the New York State PTA. It is comprised of resolution ***statements*** adopted by convention delegates. These statements are intended to guide members as to what ***action*** to take on specific issues that affect the education, health and welfare of children and youth.

Resolutions that appear in this document are reconsidered within seven years of their original adoption or reaffirmation. At seven year increments they are reintroduced to convention delegates. By majority vote, delegates determine whether to adopt positions that have been recommended for ***retention*** (reaffirmation) or ***update***, or to be ***rescinded***. A resolution may be rescinded from this document when the action(s) in the resolved clauses has been taken. Rescinded resolutions are entered into an ongoing record of retired resolutions. Action may be taken through legislation, regulation or program. Delegates may also be asked to adopt a position(s) in the form of a ***new*** resolution, one that has not been previously presented to the delegate body. Resolutions are arranged from the most recently adopted retention(s), update(s) and new resolution(s) to the oldest within one of 14 issue categories.

The PTA is effective only through the support and action of its members. Once positions are adopted the NYS PTA relies on local units, councils and regions to educate members and the public on the issues and to encourage grassroots advocacy.

KEY:

(R-) Retention – convention delegates voted to retain a position after seven years, and wording remains as originally submitted.

(U-) Update – convention delegates voted to retain after seven years, but wording has been changed or removed from the original position.

SED State Education Department

NYS New York State

HOW TO READ DATES:

Most recent year of adoption, followed by ("R-" or "U-" plus the year(s) submitted).

Examples – Retention: 2009 (R- '02); Update: 2008 (U- '00); New: 2009

The statements for *Action* that appear in this document are the "resolved" clauses of resolutions, numbered and written as adopted by convention delegates. Since NYS PTA is a branch of the National PTA, it is important to refer to National PTA's **Legislative Program** as an additional action guide.

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I Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

SALE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN SUPERMARKETS – 2010 (R-'03, U-'96, R-'89, U-'82); 1.

Oppose any legislation permitting the sale of liquor and wine in supermarkets, convenience stores and drug stores.

COMPREHENSIVE K-12 DRUG, ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE RESISTANCE EDUCATION – 2010

(U-'02); 1. Urge SED and the Legislature to mandate and fund comprehensive K-12 drug, alcohol and other substance abuse prevention education. **2.** Urge school districts to form substance abuse education coalitions, to develop and oversee prevention programs in their schools. These coalitions should be encouraged to include all interested parties such as law enforcement, media, community, parents, teachers, administrators, students and health care professionals. **3.** That all substance abuse prevention programs be evaluated regularly to measure effectiveness. Programs shall be modified based on evaluation and trends in student attitudes and behaviors.

DETOXIFICATION OF MINORS – 2009; 1. Urge that public and private detoxification facilities for minors be made available within close proximity to a minor's area of residency at or above the level of access available to adults. **2.** Seek and support legislation that gives parents and guardians rightful authority over a minor to obtain mental and medical assessment of such minor in order to determine whether he/she requires involuntary detoxification and stabilization. **3.** Urge its units, councils and regions to advocate for the education of parents/guardians and community members about the dangers of substance abuse and the treatment options for minors.

SALE OF TOBACCO TO MINORS – 2009 (R-'02, R-'95, R-'88); 1. Urge local units to seek the cooperation of their local law enforcement agencies in enforcing the law banning the sale of tobacco products to minors and those local ordinances pertaining to it. **2.** Urge its local units to communicate with their local governments expressing their desire to see stringent penalties for offense of these laws and to seek local ordinances (banning cigarette machines, demanding their removal after first offense or at least regulating their locations within an establishment, making them less accessible).

POINT OF SALE ACCESSIBILITY AND ADVERTISING OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS – 2009 (R-'02, U-'00);

1. Urge and support legislation requiring that any establishment selling tobacco and/or any other tobacco products may not engage in point-of-sale advertising of these products where candy, sports trading cards or toys are displayed for sale (such point-of sale advertising to include all printed or graphic material bearing the brand name, logo, symbol, motto, selling message or anything identifiable with these products). **2.** Urge and support legislation that would prohibit audio and/or video formats (i.e. "static video display") to be played at or shown at the point of sale.

PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM THE INFLUENCE OF TOBACCO IN MOVIES – 2007; 1.

Endorse and support the four actions within the Smoke Free Movies Initiative, to: **1.** Rate new movies showing tobacco use "R" except if they reflect clear dangers or to portray a historical figure; **2.** Certify no payoffs or placements from the tobacco industry; **3.** Provide strong anti-smoking ads in any film with smoking; and **4.** Stop identifying tobacco brands.

DRUG TESTING IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS – 2007 (R-'00, R-'93, R-'86); 1.

Oppose urinalysis testing for drugs for elementary and secondary students in schools. **2.** Encourage school districts to develop methods for dealing with suspected substance use, abuse and dependency among students, using school personnel who are trained in substance abuse detection. **3.** Encourage units and councils to work with school districts to establish programs and seek funding for dependency prevention, intervention and "after-care" programs.

COMPREHENSIVE NYS TOBACCO CONTROL & PREVENTION PROGRAM – 2006 (U-'99); **1.** Seek and support sustainable funding at the recommended CDC levels for the New York State Department of Health Tobacco Control Program, **2.** Urge that the essential components of the New York State Department of Health Tobacco Control Program be maintained and enhanced.

UNDERAGE ACCESS RESULTING FROM THE DIRECT SHIPPING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES – 2005 (R-'98); **1.** Seek and support legislation that would make the sale of alcoholic beverages over the Internet or through the mail or by telephone to minors a felony with increased fines and penalties. **2.** Seek and support legislation that would require proper labeling of shipments to indicate that shipment must be signed for by a person over 21 years of age with photo identification. **3.** Urge units and councils to educate their members about the ease of access to alcohol on the Internet or through the mail or by telephone and the risks involved and the need for vigilance.

MARIJUANA – 2005 (R-'98, U-'91, R-'84); **1.** Reaffirm its position against the legalization of marijuana, except for medical use approved by the Food and Drug Administration, and continue to work toward the education of children and parents regarding harmful effects from continued use of marijuana.

MOVIES' INFLUENCE ON TOBACCO USE – 2004; **1.** Encourage units/councils to educate the public that watching movies that depict tobacco use greatly increases the probability that young people will experiment with and become addicted to tobacco.

II Citizenship & Equality of Opportunity

STUDENT PARTICIPATION – 2009 (R-'02, R-'95, R-'88); **1.** PTA units in secondary schools, PTA councils and PTA districts be encouraged to have students on their boards. **2.** Urge school boards and administrators to establish channels for regular dialogue with secondary school students representing a cross-section of the students enrolled in the school district.

PREJUDICE – 2008 (U-'01, U-'95, R-'88); **1.** Express condemnation of all acts of desecration directed against houses of worship and cemeteries, and acts of violence, intimidation and harassment of individuals because of their racial, ethnic or religious characteristics, sexual orientation, gender, age or disabilities. **2.** Support and encourage law enforcement agencies to continue to apprehend and, where applicable, prosecute individuals who are responsible for acts of racism, vandalism, discrimination and harassment. **3.** Urge that all local PTA units and councils in cooperation with schools and community agencies aid in developing more effective programs in human relations, or encourage their school districts to use already developed curricula available through the State Education Department or other agencies, thereby encouraging the respect for the rights of all humanity.

MULTICULTURAL IN-SERVICE – 2008 (U-'01, U-'94, R-'87); **1.** Support the Commissioner's Regulations that require all candidates for professional certification to take courses that would prepare them to serve the needs of a diverse student body. **2.** PTA units and councils encourage their local school district to provide in-service instruction to teachers, administrators and other school-related personnel that would prepare them to serve the needs of students from diverse ethnicities and cultures.

FINES AND/OR SERVICES FOR VANDALISM – 2005 (R-'98, U-'91, R-'84); **1.** Urge that school districts and courts provide counseling or other preventive educational measures for all students who have been found guilty of vandalism to school property. **2.** Urge that when courts find a minor guilty of vandalizing school property, school boards seek retribution through the court in the form of service to the school or community and fines to cover the cost of the vandalism to the legal limit. **3.** If the vandals and/or their parents are unable to provide full monetary compensation, additional service to the school or community be sought in lieu of or in addition to the fines. **4.** For those incidents of vandalism, which are not brought to the courts, school

districts adopt policies establishing consequences such as service to school or community for the students involved.

FAIR HOUSING – 2005 (R-'98, R-'91, R-'84); **1.** Urge its units to be aware of discriminatory housing practices against families with children, particularly single parent families, minority families and families of children and adults with handicapping conditions. **2.** Urge its units to promote programs disseminating information of fair housing laws and the rights of individuals under those laws. **3.** Support measures to strengthen existing laws to promote stronger enforcement of existing fair housing laws.

ENFORCEMENT OF CURRENT REGULATIONS FOR PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES – 2004 (R-'97, R-'90, R-'83); **1.** Oppose any changes in federal or state laws and/or regulations that could lead to delays or extensions of state deadlines regarding the evaluation and appropriate placement of children and youth with disabilities. **2.** Oppose any changes in federal or state laws and/or regulations that would allow any increase in class size. **3.** Urge the Commissioner of Education to strongly enforce all the current regulations regarding the education of children and youth with disabilities.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROGRAM – 2004 (R-'97, R-'90); **1.** Encourage development and support of the Community Schools Program in areas where needed and appropriate. **2.** Promote continued allocation of the resources necessary for the continuance and expansion of the Community Schools Program.

III Cooperative Role of Parents and Educational Professionals

3020-A HEARINGS – 2010 (R-'03, R-'96, R-'89, U-'82); **1.** Support modification to Education Law 3020-a to expedite the resolution of charges while preserving the rights of the teacher or administrator.

PARENT PARTICIPATION – 2009 (R-'02, R-'95, R-'88); **1.** SED advise and inform PTAs of the existence of all mandated school councils. **2.** Urge the SED and the state and local agencies and school boards to use the PTA to serve on mandated school councils and other committees concerning children, wherever appropriate. **3.** NYS PTA and its regions make available parent representatives to serve wherever appropriate. **4.** PTA units and councils make themselves available to their school districts to serve on school councils, wherever appropriate.

REGIONAL COMMISSION TO STUDY PART 200 REGULATIONS – 2009 (U-'02, R-'95, R-'88); **1.** Urge the State Education Department regional office supervisors to meet with parents from PTA/SEPTA and BOCES on a regular basis and share information through the state-funded parents centers. **2.** Regional groups advise the regional offices of unmet needs within the region regarding the education of children with disabling conditions. **3.** Regional groups assist the regional offices in developing and reporting data and evaluating the services provided to children with disabling conditions.

INVOLVING PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION PLANS – 2008 (R-'01, R-'94); **1.** Urge the Commissioner of Education and the Board of Regents to amend Part 200.2 (c) of the Commissioner's Regulations to require that District Special Education Plans be a product of a committee including parents, teachers and others, the specific number of participants and selection process being designated by the regulations. **2.** That the parents be selected by school-related parent organizations that represent the interests of parents of students with special needs. **3.** That the District Special Education Plans be required to include a long term general direction of where each district plans to be in regard to the provision of special education services. **4.** That the District Special Education Plans be required to include all program aspects of the provision of special education services.

CPSE PARENT MEMBER – 2007 (U-'00); **1.** Urge that a mandated "parent member" to the CPSE Committee as established by the IDEA'97 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004) be eligible to serve for five years past the designated time that their child is declassified by the committee or ages out of CPSE level services.

504 COMMITTEES – 2007 (R-'00); **1.** Support a mandate in New York State regulations, regarding students covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, requiring that the parent of a child who is referred to a 504 Committee be a member of that committee along with mandated school personnel to meet, assist with and formulate decisions regarding accommodations and service for the child.

PARENTS ON SHARED DECISION MAKING COMMITTEES – 2006 (U-'99; R-'92); **1.** Recommend that the New York State Education Department provide to all unit and council presidents and region PTA leaders a copy of Regulation 100.11 as adopted by the Board of Regents. **2.** NYS PTA urge the training of participants in the process of shared decision-making and the showcasing of school districts that have school-based planning teams with parents as active participants. **3.** Recommend that units, councils and regions sponsor training for parents on the process of shared decision-making, group dynamics, interpersonal skills, listening skills. **4.** Advocate that in the planning for these school-based planning teams that training of all team members be included as part of any policy adopted by the school district. **5.** Urge that school districts train the team together and that parents are included in that training.

ABSENTEE NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES – 2005 (R-'98, R-'91, U-'84); **1.** To seek legislation that would repeal Sections c and d of NYS Education Law 3213. **2.** Seek legislation that would require that persons in parental relationships of all students grade K-12 be notified that they may request in writing notification of a child's absence from school. **3.** The written request includes the telephone number of the person or persons to be notified and any other information to facilitate communication. **4.** Said notification take place by the most prompt and expedient manner possible by a person or persons authorized by the school district. **5.** Urge its units and councils to educate persons in parental relationships as to the reasons for and significance of completion of the request for notification form.

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING – 2005 (R-'98, R-'91, R-'84); **1.** Urge its districts, councils and units to place greater emphasis on training its members to analyze programs, curricula and school budgets and to better comprehend education law and school district policies and procedures, thereby preparing members to engage in more knowledgeable discussion with educators, school boards and legislators in order to convey priorities, innovative approaches and options necessary to maintain quality education for all children.

TO ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR THE PARENT MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION (CSE) AND THE COMMITTEE ON PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION (CPSE) – 2004 (R-'97, U-'90); **1.** Support maintaining a parent member as a mandated member of the CPSE and CSE committees. **2.** Urge NYSED's Office for Special Education Services to require training through the Special Education Training and Resource Center (SETRC) and establish guidelines for the parent member on the CSE and CPSE.

IV Education Emphasis

COMPULSORY EDUCATION – 2010 (R-'03, R-'96, R-'89); **1.** Support legislation that would amend the Education Law to change the compulsory education attendance age to seventeen.

ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND SETTINGS FOR STUDENTS AT RISK – 2010 (U-'03, R-'96, R-'89); **1.** Support the educational concept of alternative high school programs and settings for students at risk. **2.** Seek adequate fiscal resources from the State to support alternative high school programs and settings for students at risk that include the provision of counseling

services, and further that the funding be unrestricted in nature so that school districts have the flexibility to support programs designed to meet the particular needs of their students at risk.

THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT – 2009 (U-'02);

1. The Reauthorization of IDEA be for a minimum of six years before it is necessary to reauthorize again. **2.** Pursuant to the DSM-IVR criteria, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) be specifically added to the list of official classifications in the IDEA. **3.** A "Parent Member" be included in the official committee membership in the IDEA, and that the IDEA provide only the parent/guardian with the option to "waive" the requirement that the "Parent Member" be in attendance at the meeting. **4.** A school psychologist be included in the official committee membership in the IDEA. **5.** The IDEA provide full funding (Full funding is defined as 40% of the National Average of Per Pupil Expenditure in the 1975, 1997, and 2004 legislation.) to the states and the school districts for programs and services, and that the full funding be designated in the federal education budget each year. **6.** The U.S. Department of Education monitor the IDEA requirements for high school graduation, and that any student, regardless of receiving special education-related services, will be required to meet statewide assessments and credit requirements for graduation with a state-recognized diploma.

SIGN LANGUAGE – 2009 (U-'02, R-'95, U-'88); **1.** The NYS PTA units and councils encourage their school districts to offer sign language as a second language option.

SPECIAL EDUCATION – 2009 (U-'02, R-'95, R-'88); **1.** Urge the State Education Department to change the regulations to read that all children with disabling conditions from age 11 and up are entitled to career and technical training for "real work" by using the SED Career Development Occupational Study (CDOS) Standards. **2.** The NYS PTA urge the SED to monitor school districts carefully to ensure continued compliance.

SECURING A NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ENDORSED DIPLOMA FOR ALL STUDENTS – 2008; **1.** Urge the New York State Education Department (NYSED) to continue to offer a variety of options of diplomas that meet the unique needs of all students and that will ensure opportunities for these students to graduate and earn or receive a valid diploma recognized by higher education and the work place. **2.** Urge the NYSED to offer an additional standards-based diploma for all students who cannot successfully fulfill Regents requirements. **3.** NYS PTA and its constituent units urge the NYSED to continue to offer the Regents Competency Tests (RCT) for a local diploma for all students if unable to successfully complete the Regents Exams.

REGENTS EXAMINATION SCHEDULES – 2008; **1.** Urge the New York State Education Department to maintain the current practice of administering Regents Examinations only during designated Regents Exam periods.

GIFTED AND TALENTED IDENTIFICATION PROGRAMS – 2008 (R-'01, R-'94, R-'87); **1.** Urge the New York State Education Department to continue to enforce regulations as found in Part 117 of amendments to the Commissioner's regulations, requiring the identification of gifted and talented students and the notification of their parents. **2.** Seek and support legislation that would mandate instructional educational programs and funding for these programs for students identified as gifted and talented. **3.** Urge public schools to establish Committees for Gifted and Talented, consisting of school administrators, teachers of the gifted and talented, parents of gifted and talented students, and other appropriately trained school and community specialists, to assist in identification of and determination of appropriate educational programs and services for these children. **4.** Urge the Board of Regents and the State Education Department to require undergraduate teacher training so that prospective teachers recognize and understand the unique characteristics and needs of gifted and talented children. **5.** That in-service education in the instruction of gifted and talented children be urged for all teachers in the school districts in New York State and be enhanced by leadership, materials and methods of instruction by the New York State Education Department.

GIFTED AND TALENTED COUNSELING – 2008 (R-'01, R-'94, R-'87); 1. Urge the Board of Regents and the SED to require guidance counselors to provide direct and on-going services to address the special needs of children who have been identified as gifted and talented.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT – 2008 (U-'01, R-'94, R-'87); 1. Urge the SED to continue to support staff development programs tailored to district needs. **2.** Urge the State legislature to provide consistent and appropriate funding for staff development programs.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION – 2008 (R-'01, R-'94, R-'87); 1. Urge local Boards of Education to establish in-school suspension programs that provide for continuity of instruction.

RESTRUCTURE THE REGENTS COMPONENT RETESTING SYSTEM – 2007; 1. Urge the New York State Education Department to restructure component retesting to: 1) include all curriculum areas in which regents exams are offered, and; 2) be aligned with the Regents exams content and format, and **2.** Urge the New York State Education Department to simplify the component retesting program for easier access by: 1) scheduling component retests during all Regents exam periods, but not to conflict with other scheduled Regents exams; 2) allowing students with a score of at least 55, but not greater than 64, on a Regents exam to take a component retest, and 3) allowing students to sit for component retests regardless of grade level after receiving appropriate review in the component area.

HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH – 2006; 1. That NYS PTA, units, councils, and regions disseminate information and educate parents, students and the community on the importance of full access to education for homeless children and youth, including emancipated youth.

DEFINITION AND IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED – 2006 (R-'99; R-'92, R-'85); 1. Urge the SED to ask for increased funding to provide more stringent enforcement to ensure that both a district's gifted and talented students be identified to the full extent of the definition and appropriate programs be provided to address the three areas of gifted and talented as defined by the SED. **2.** The district be required to notify the parents or guardians of a student identified as gifted or talented regardless of whether or not a district has a program of gifted and talented education to meet their needs. **3.** To urge its units and councils to encourage their local school districts to comply with the SED regulations.

MIGRANT CHILDREN – 2005 (R-'98, R-'91, U-'84); 1. Encourage local and state educational agencies to develop and implement processes that improve migrant students' access to secondary school services in the following areas: instructional opportunities, credit accumulation and counseling and support services.

RECESS FOR STUDENTS – 2004; 1. Urge the Board of Regents and the NYSED to encourage every school district to offer at least 20 minutes a day of supervised, unstructured time (recess) for all elementary students in NYS. **2.** Urge that recess not be eliminated from a child's school day due to academic failure and that teachers, parents and administrators consider alternative behavior modification methods before denying any child recess activities.

MULTIPLE DAY TEST ADMINISTRATION FOR ALL STUDENTS WITH EXTENDED TIME AND TWO REGENTS ON THE SAME DAY – 2004; 1. Seek to have the NYSED revise its policy so all students, who have extended test time of any duration as determined by the CSE or 504 Committee, be permitted to use multiple day test accommodation when scheduled for two Regents exams on the same day regardless of the student's particular disability or management needs. **2.** Seek to have the NYSED revise its procedure that will grant the local school district CSE or 504 Committee the authority to make the decision to allow the use of multiple day test accommodation with an obligation to inform the NYSED, through its building principal, but not require NYSED's approval for accommodation.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR CASE LOAD – 2002 (U-'01, R-'94, R-'87; REFERRED TO COMMITTEE 2009); 1. Urge the State Education Department and the Board of Regents to establish a

maximum number of students per guidance counselor in all public secondary schools and that this ratio not exceed 200 to 1.

V Environment

USE OF POLYSTYRENE PRODUCTS – 2010 (U-'03, R-'96, R-'89); **1.** Seek and support legislation that would ban the use of polystyrene products at all state and public school facilities. **2.** Urge the state to encourage local municipalities to issue their own ban on polystyrene products. **3.** Recommend all its constituent units work to eliminate polystyrene products at all PTA-sponsored events.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT – 2010 (U-'03, R-'96, R-'89); **1.** Urge the use of pesticides only as last resort and the promotion of alternative pest control methods in order to protect children's health, safety and environment.

HAZARDS FROM LAND, WATER, AIR, NOISE AND LIGHT POLLUTION – 2010 (U-'03, U-'96, R-'89, U-'82); **1.** Support federal and state programs such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, the "Super Fund" and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. **2.** Encourage members to participate in community education programs on environmental issues concerning air, water, land, noise and light pollution.

MERCURY REDUCTION IN THE ENVIRONMENT – 2009 (U-'02); **1.** Support legislation to reduce mercury discharge into the environment and to regulate industry contributing to mercury pollution by emissions or in products. **2.** Encourage its units and councils to inform and educate the public as to the hazards of mercury exposure and means of reducing mercury exposure. **3.** Encourage local school boards to eliminate or reduce the use of mercury products in the schools.

LABELING OF MILK PRODUCTS – 2009 (R-'02, U-'01, R-'94); **1.** Urge the New York State Legislators to mandate that all milk coming from cows injected with hormones be labeled.

BAN ON DEET WITH CONCENTRATION OVER 30% – 2009 (R-'02, R-'95); **1.** Urge the legislature to ban the use of DEET with concentrations over 30%.

CELLULAR PHONE TOWERS – 2007 (R-'00); **1.** Support legislation that would encourage local communities, including parents and school officials, to regulate the placement of cell towers and cell tower antennas particularly in schools and areas where children congregate. **2.** Supports continued research into the long term effects of radio frequency and microwave frequencies on humans especially as they apply to children. **3.** Seek to educate parents and school officials as to the current debate over the placement of cell towers and antennas.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS – 2007 (R-'00, R-'93); **1.** Support the passage of legislation requiring that specific standards be set for indoor air quality levels in schools.

PROTECTION OF GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES – 2007 (R-'00, R-'93, R-'86); **1.** Support the concept of a safe waste water recharge system so that fresh water taken from wells for conveying sewage wastes can be returned through the natural filtering process to underground aquifers. **2.** Support the concept of safe resource recovery as an appropriate way of handling solid waste, eliminating the leaching of contaminants into our fresh water system. **3.** Encourage and support the effective management of groundwater supplies through research programs to develop better techniques for protecting and conserving the resource, monitoring groundwater supply and quality, recharging aquifers and desalination of salt water. **4.** Encourage education of children and youth regarding the need for conservation and water management.

SOIL CONTAMINATION ON SCHOOL GROUNDS – 2007 (R-'00, R-'93, R-'86); **1.** Support such efforts as to determine what levels of soil contamination by toxic substances are acceptable on school grounds. **2.** Support legislation to designate levels of safety for all ground and soil

contaminates on school grounds. **3.** Support legislation to designate levels of acceptable exposure to children on school playgrounds and athletic fields. **4.** Encourage existing agencies, such as the NYS Dept. of Health, Dept. of Environmental Conservation and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to determine immediate health risks and limits of safe contact to children on all existing sites by encouraging the testing of soil for all toxic ground and soil contaminants. **5.** Once levels of soil contamination on school grounds are determined to be above acceptable levels, that the established agencies require the responsible party(ies) to alleviate the affected areas immediately.

IMPLEMENTING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE ACTION – 2006 (R-'99, U-'92);

1. Seek and support legislation on the national, state and local levels which encourages conservation of resources and use of more environmentally sound, renewable energy sources. **2.** Urge the SED to develop environmental outcomes so that each student will acquire knowledge of the ecological consequences of choices in the use of the environment and natural resources. **3.** Urge local school districts to use school facilities as environmental living, learning laboratories to promote understanding of interdependency and how human activities relate to our ecosystems. **4.** Encourage the SED to accept collegiate level Environmental Science Courses for teachers seeking general science certification.

PAPER RECYCLING AND RECYCLED PAPER USE – 2005 (R-'98, R-'91);

1. Urge units and councils to reduce paper waste and encourage schools to reduce paper waste. **2.** Encourage PTAs at local, district, state and national levels to use recycled paper in their PTA work. **3.** Urge National PTA to promote the use of recycled paper and paper recycling in schools.

SEWAGE WASTE PROBLEMS – 2004 (R-'97, R-'90, R-'83);

1. Support state legislation for an environmental air quality and genetic study on proposed and existing sewage plants. **2.** Urge authorities to regulate and enforce existing statutes in regard to indiscriminate use of sanitary sewage systems with the disposal of unlawful material (toxic waste) by industrial, commercial and residential users.

TOXIC ART SUPPLIES – 2004 (R-'97, R-'90, R-'83); **1.** Urge school districts to check into the art products already in their schools for safety and to seek removal of such products as may be necessary for the health and safety of students using these products.

VI Financial Support for Public Education

ESTABLISH A LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE TO REFORM STATE AID TO EDUCATION FORMULAS – 2010

(R-'03); **1.** Encourage the NYS Legislature to establish a task force to study current and proposed school aid formulas and develop a funding solution that is adequate, equitable, predictable and understandable.

REFORM OF STATE AID TO EDUCATION – 2009 (R-'02, R-'95, R-'88);

1. Support and encourage legislation that would set a minimum level of state aid of at least 50% of the total educational costs for the state. **2.** Support and encourage legislation to create built-in minimum levels of funding for state-prescribed staffing ratios and other mandates.

FUNDING FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS – 2008 (U-'01);

1. Urge and support legislation to change the method of funding charter schools to eliminate the adverse impact on public school districts. **2.** That the NYS Congress of Parents and Teachers support legislation that will hold charter schools to the same financial accountability as all public schools.

SUPPLEMENTAL LOTTERY AID TO EDUCATION – 2007 (R-'00, R-'93, R-'86);

1. Seek and support enforcement of existing legislation which would clearly provide 45% of the lottery proceeds as supplemental funds for education in addition to the allocated amount from the state's general revenues.

FUNDING FOR EDUCATION MANDATES – 2006 (R-'99, R-'92, R-'85); 1. Encourage funding by the State Legislature for new educational mandates.

EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF STATE AID – 2005 (R-'98, R-'91, R-'84); 1. Support development of an equitable distribution of state funds to provide equal educational opportunities for all public school students. **2.** To continue to urge the legislature and the governor to increase financial support of public education.

MANDATED SCHOOL BUDGET VOTES – 2004 (R-'97); 1. PTA units and councils educate their community on the effects of a late state budget on its school district. **2.** PTA units and councils urge the legislature to meet its constitutional duty by passing the budget on time.

LEVELING UP LOW WEALTH DISTRICTS – 2004 (R-'97, R-'90, R-'83); 1. Continue to support state aid formulas that provide for more equitable educational opportunity by leveling up the low wealth districts.

VII Health and Nutrition

FOOD INSPECTION AND REGULATION – 2010 (R-'03, R-'96, R-'89, U-'82); 1. Support the proper inspection and regulation of food by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and other agencies, such as the NYS Dept. of Health (DOH), to prevent mislabeling and to detect contamination.

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAMS – 2010 (R-'03, R-'96, R-'89, U-'82); 1. Oppose any cuts in the National School Lunch Program. **2.** Urge Congress to reauthorize school lunch and breakfast programs and the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). **3.** Urge school districts and schools that do not yet have them, where there is a demonstrated need, to initiate them and operate them in accordance with the federal guidelines even though they may no longer be required by law.

PREVENTIVE HEALTH PROGRAMS – 2010 (U-'03, U-'96, R-'89, U-'82); 1. Strongly support age-appropriate preventive health programs such as: prenatal and well-child care, newborn screenings, immunizations, nutritional screenings, dental care, vision and hearing screenings, scoliosis and blood pressure screenings, lead poisoning and tuberculin skin tests, and voluntary screening for genetic diseases.

SCHOOL NURSES – 2009 (R-'02, R-'95, R-'88); 1. Encourage its units and councils to assess with the staff and school boards of their districts the risks of having inadequate health care for students. **2.** Urge the State Education Department to mandate a full-time registered nurse in every school building.

ATHLETIC TRAINERS – 2008 (R-'01, R-'94, U-'87); 1. Urge the SED to require each school district to have a NYS certified athletic trainer available during practices and home games of secondary school sports.

HERBAL CIGARETTES – 2007 (U-'00); 1. Encourage local units and councils to educate parents and children about the potential dangers of herbal cigarettes. **2.** Urge the SED to update school health curricula to include information on the dangers of smoking herbal cigarettes

REASONABLE ACCESS TO FOOD DURING SCHOOL – 2007 (R-'00, R-'93); 1. Urge the SED to revise Commissioner's Regulation 7CRF, part 210 to give children the same protection afforded to adults in the workforce and require school districts to provide all children with access to lunch no earlier than three hours and no later than five hours from the time a student becomes the responsibility of a school district (e.g. at the beginning of a bus run.)

TRAINING OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES IN THE CARE OF A CHOKING VICTIM – 2006; 1. Support regulation or legislation that would require, at minimum, one school employee trained in the care

of the choking victim to be present at each food service period, in each lunch room, **2.** Advocate for funding to be provided to school districts for the training of school employees in the care of the choking victim.

MENTAL HEALTH INSURANCE PARITY – 2005; 1. Support legislation for parity in insurance coverage to assist children and youth in need of mental health services. **2.** Work to educate parents and the school community about parity issues and available mental health services and programs.

HEALTHY CHOICES – 2005; 1. Raise awareness and educate children and youth, parents, school personnel and the community about healthy choices; **2.** Encourage units and councils to advocate for healthy choices in the home, school and community; **3.** Urge parents to participate in school wellness committees and work to establish policies regarding healthy choices; **4.** Encourage decision makers, including legislators, to implement, support and fund programs and activities that foster healthy choices.

ELIMINATION OF TRANSFATS FROM SCHOOL FOODS – 2005; 1. NYS PTA is concerned about obesity and other diet-related diseases and their effects upon children and youth and supports the elimination of non-naturally occurring trans fats from school foods. **2.** PTAs actively work to reduce non-naturally occurring trans fats from school meals, à la cart vending choices, foods available for sale at after-school events and other events, and foods used in fundraising. **3.** Encourage units and councils to actively work to educate school administrators, faculty, food service providers, parents and children about healthy food choices.

AWARENESS OF MEDICATION MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS – 2005 (R-'98); 1. Urge units and councils to encourage school districts to ensure implementation of school policies and procedures regarding administration and management of prescription medication. **2.** Urge units and councils to provide programs and information to raise awareness through education of adults in a parental role regarding access to medications. **3.** Support annual in-service programs for faculty and staff that include awareness of symptoms of identified medical conditions for students under their supervision.

INGREDIENT LABELING – 2005 (R-'98, R-'91, R-'84); 1. Support legislation that would require full disclosure, in clear language, of all ingredients and additives, including chemical additives in water, and on food, drug and cosmetic labels. **2.** Encourage its units and councils to educate its members as to the importance of reading labels and understanding the possible significance of the effects of the listed ingredients on the human body in order to protect the nutrition and health of children.

INFECTION CONTROL TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS – 2005 (R-'98, R-'91); 1. Urge the SED to require school districts to train all school volunteers and school personnel in infection control techniques to insure the safety and health of all students and adults in the school setting. **2.** That this infection control technique training follow the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations and that it be conducted by a qualified professional, be comprehensive and include a demonstration of procedures as well as an opportunity for hands-on experience. **3.** Encourage its units and councils to promote this infection control training for those members volunteering in the school until such time as the school district provides the training.

HEALTHY SCHOOL FOODS – 2004; 1. Support initiatives that would encourage local school districts to provide optional plant-based vegetarian (vegan) school entrees; nutrition education materials and instruction; eliminate high calorie, high fat, low nutrition desserts from the menu; eliminate à la carte and vending items that are low nutrient, high calorie, high fat or high sodium and replace them with high nutrient and generally low calorie items; and support Farm to School programs, including organic where possible. **2.** Encourage units/councils to educate parents and school district staff about healthy eating patterns including plant-based entrees. **3.** Urge units/councils to share in the decision making about implementing, within their own schools and school districts, the recommendations of the NYS Legislative Resolutions, and support any

legislative resolutions that promote healthy choices, such as vegetarian, in school lunch programs.

HEAD INJURIES – 2004 (R-'97); 1. Seek and support legislation establishing a state tracking system for head injuries in all children and students and a record that would follow each child and student from year to year. **2.** Seek and support legislation establishing guidelines for return to play after a concussion. **3.** Urge local school districts and community athletic organizations to include the addition of head injuries on health summaries and yearly physical forms. **4.** Local units and councils educate their community on the dangers of head injuries.

TO REQUIRE COORDINATING COUNCILS ON SCHOOL HEALTH AS A MEANS OF EFFECTIVELY USING SCHOOL TIME – 2004 (R-'97); 1. Urge the Board of Regents and the SED to require every school district to establish a district wide comprehensive school health and wellness advisory council which would include health and education professionals, parents, community leaders and other stakeholders.

"INERT INGREDIENTS" – 2004 (R-'97); 1. Urge and support legislation, which would require pesticide manufacturers and formulators to disclose by product labeling the total composition of pesticide products including each "inert" ingredient in the formulation.

CPR/AED AND FIRST AID – 2004 (U-'97, R-'90, R-'83); 1. Encourage the NYSED to require, and encourage funding for, all schools to provide the opportunity for all school personnel to receive annual training in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR)/automated external defibrillation (AED) and first aid.

RAPID WEIGHT LOSS DIETS – 2004 (R-'97, R-'90, R-'83); 1. Encourage school districts to include as part of nutrition education the possible health hazards of rapid weight loss diets. **2.** That coaches do not encourage rapid weight loss or gain for participation in sports programs.

VIII Juvenile Protection

PROTECTING YOUTH IN CULTS – 2010 (R-'03, R-'96, R-'89, U-'82); 1. Urge enforcement of all compulsory education, abuse, neglect and health laws for those minor children being raised by "cults". **2.** Support legislation that will enable the courts, upon sufficient evidence that radical changes in behavior have coincided with an individual's close association with a certain group, to grant parents conservatorship for a reasonable period of time over their child.

BACKGROUND CHECKS OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES – 2010 (U-'03, R-'96, R-'89); 1. Urge school districts to do thorough background checks of school employees before employment and to request verification that background checks are performed on employees of companies under contract with the school district who may come in direct contact with the school district's children.

HAZING – 2009 (U-'02, U-'01, R-'94, R-'87); 1. Urge that schools educate their students and that PTAs educate their members as to the possible dangers that may occur in hazings.

EMANCIPATION OF MINORS – 2009 (U-'02, U-'98, R-'91, R-'84); 1. Seek and support the passage of legislation that would establish conformity among child protection statutes, give parents rightful authority over their 16 and 17 year-old children, and define the age of emancipation in a manner that would protect the rights of young people and their parents. **2.** Said legislation should provide that a parent's financial obligation to support his or her child under the age of 21 shall cease when it is demonstrated that the child is financially independent, or that the child, against the will of the parents, voluntarily and without good cause, has absented himself or herself from the custody and control of the parent or other lawful authority. (See 413 of Family Court Act, Sub 3 of 32, or Domestic Relations Act).

TREATMENT OF PERSONS IN NEED OF SUPERVISION (PINS) – 2008 (R-'01, R-'98, R-'91, R-'84); **1.** Urge local communities to establish individual and family counseling services, crisis mediation centers - where conflicts may be worked out to maintain family stability, and programs for the diagnosis and treatment of Persons In Need Of Supervision. **2.** Seek to have services and resources delivered to PINS in such a way as to keep the family together whenever possible. **3.** Oppose the placement of PINS in large correctional institutions or in facilities far from their homes.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/SEXUAL HARASSMENT – 2008 (R'01, R-'94); **1.** Support implementation of family life curricula in every school. **2.** Support inclusion of Domestic Violence/Sexual Harassment education as part of a comprehensive health education curriculum including family life education. **3.** Urge local PTA units to bring these issues to the attention of PTA members and youth in their communities, and encourage parent participation in prevention and awareness of sexual harassment, date abuse and date rape. **4.** Focus on prevention of date rape and domestic violence through education and publications.

TO PROMOTE NON-VIOLENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION ON TELEVISION – 2008 (R-'01, R-'94); **1.** Urge the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) to review the incidence of violence in relation to the incidence of non-violent conflict resolution whenever a broadcaster seeks a license renewal. **2.** Urge the FCC to demand proof that the ratio of violence to non-violent conflict resolution presented by a broadcaster be in the public interest. **3.** In cases where the ratio given is not deemed to be in the public interest by the FCC, the FCC to refuse renewal of that license.

PROTECTION OF STUDENT PRIVACY – 2008 (R-'01, R-'94, R-'87); **1.** Urge the SED to investigate and report currently existing school policies regarding the body search of students. **2.** Units and councils encourage their local school districts to adopt student search policies expressly forbidding strip searches.

PUPILS WITH SUPPORT SERVICE NEEDS – 2007 (R-'00, R-'93, U-'86); **1.** Encourage Boards of Education to identify at-risk children and provide needed services as is already required by Commissioner's Regulations (CR). **2.** Strongly support collaborative efforts with non-school agencies to provide services.

CYBER SAFETY – 2006; **1.** Inform and educate parents, students, educators, school staff, and communities on the dangers associated with Internet, wireless and other electronic communication. **2.** Heighten parents' technologic awareness and skills and encourage the use of cyber safety strategies to ensure the safety of children and youth, and to encourage responsible and ethical use of Internet resources. **3.** Work with collaborating partners and others to advocate for the protection of children and youth in a cyber world. **4.** Work to ensure that appropriate laws, policies and regulations are in place to protect children and youth when using the Internet, wireless and other electronic communications. **5.** That this resolution be forwarded to National PTA for consideration at their next convention.

JUVENILE OFFENDERS - PREVENTION, INTERVENTION AND FOLLOW-UP – 2006 (R-'99); **1.** Seek and support legislation to increase funding for prevention and intervention programs for high-risk youth, i.e. mentoring programs, after school activities, drug abuse counseling, etc. **2.** Seek and support legislation to increase treatment programs for juveniles accused of serious offenses, i.e. mental health, sex offense and drug treatment programs. **3.** Seek and support legislation to create aftercare programs for juvenile offenders once they return to their neighborhoods and communities.

TRANSFERRING OF RECORDS – 2006 (R-'99, R-'92); **1.** Urge the SED to inform school personnel across the state of the concern for the lack of expeditious transfer of school records; and strongly encourage the SED to develop appropriate policies and guidelines that insure the timely transfer of records. **2.** Encourage its units and councils to alert and educate parents and members as to this proposed policy and its compliance within their own districts.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – 2006 (R-'99, R-'92); **1.** Support legislation for public and private agencies within communities to establish or maintain temporary, alternate housing and shelters for victims of domestic violence. **2.** Urge that psychological and counseling services be made available for all family members in disrupted households in such a way that the safety of the victims is not jeopardized. **3.** Continue to promote and support legislation that would ensure sufficient funding for services to victims of domestic violence in NYS.

SUICIDE PREVENTION – 2006 (R-'99, R-'92, R-'85); **1.** Support legislation that provides funding for suicide prevention and intervention programs for students in grades K-12. **2.** School districts be encouraged to provide in-service training on the problem of teenage suicide for teachers and support staff. **3.** Encourage its units and councils to offer programs to educate parents about teenage suicide. **4.** Support legislation that provides funding for 24-hour suicide hot-lines to cover all areas of the state. **5.** Support the development of services for survivors of suicide attempt and to families who have lost someone to suicide.

TEACHING OUR CHILDREN PERSONAL SAFETY – 2005 (R-'98, R-'91); **1.** Encourage each unit and council to promote educational programs (for both parents and children) based on the currently mandated health and safety syllabi of the NYSED with emphasis upon personal safety techniques.

SAFEGUARDING EXPLOITED AND MISSING CHILDREN – 2005 (R-'98, R-'91, R-'84); **1.** Urge school districts to develop procedures for the registration of new students that would include a special check on individual students whose records are missing, incomplete or suspicious to verify their validity. **2.** Seek and support legislation that will toughen the laws and enforce more stringent punishment for perpetrators of serious and repeated sexual abuse crimes and murders of children.

FINGERPRINTING CHILDREN – 2004 (R-'97, R-'90, R-'83); **1.** In areas where fingerprinting programs are to be implemented, urge the local units and councils to adopt the following guidelines: (1) Seek advice and cooperation from police departments so that fingerprints are taken properly. (2) Program be arranged for other than school hours (evenings or Saturday) so that there is no possibility of fingerprinting a child without a parent's or guardian's permission. (3) A parent or guardian must accompany the child to the fingerprinting program. (4) All sets of fingerprints should be retained by the parent or guardian, thus avoiding conflicts over lost fingerprints or any question of improper use of fingerprints. (5) The cost of the program, if possible, should be defrayed by nominal fees. (6) Parent or guardian should be advised of how best to retain fingerprint records.

LIMITING CHILD LABOR – 2004 (R-'97, U-'90); **1.** Support legislation that would limit the number of hours worked before a school day; and reduce the maximum number of hours high school students can work when school is in session. **2.** Urge councils and high school units to inform parents of the existing child labor laws and the effects of inappropriate work experience on the education, social development, safety and health of our children.

MISSING CHILDREN – 2004 (R-'97, R-'90, R-'83); **1.** NYS PTA informs its members of the provisions of the Missing Children's Assistance Act.

IX Libraries, Media, Technology

FEDERAL COMMUNICATION COMMISSION (FCC) - EDUCATION REGARDING RADIO BROADCASTING – 2010 (R-'03, R-'96); **1.** Encourage the radio broadcast industry to comply with the letter and spirit of the FCC "safe harbor" provisions for children. **2.** Encourage the radio broadcast industry, and particularly those stations that appeal to children, to broadcast language and material that is suitable for children. **3.** Urge units and councils to educate parents about the need to monitor their children's radio listening and about the FCC "safe harbor" provisions and procedures for filing complaints.

UP-TO-DATE AND UNBIASED EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL – 2009 (R-'02, U-'01, R-'94, R-'87); **1.** Support ongoing challenges to the decisions of cases that limit the content of school books. **2.** Communicate with school textbook publishers to make them aware of the continuing need for textbooks that offer an overview of opinion and factual information. **3.** Encourage school boards and school board associations to unite in their determination to purchase educational materials which contain up-to-date information and present facts in an unbiased manner. **4.** Every NYS school district ensures that all instructional materials and textbooks to be used in schools are available in useable alternative formats for all students (Chapter 377 Education Law 2001).

TV/VIDEO VIEWING IN SCHOOLS – 2009 (U-'02, R-'95); **1.** Encourage the Board of Regents to adopt a regulation that would require every school district to have a policy for the use of movies, videos (DVD, Blu-Ray, etc.), television and the Internet in all classrooms. **2.** This policy be formulated with parental involvement.

CHALLENGES TO TEXTBOOK AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL REVIEW – 2006 (R-'99, R-'92, R-'85); **1.** Encourage its units to work with their respective school districts to implement the procedures for selection of textbooks and educational materials as recommended in the position paper with the same title and adopted on Feb. 8, 1985, amended and reaffirmed in 1990 and 1998. **2.** Urge all units to work specifically to support adherence to the provision requiring that no challenged material be removed pending a decision arrived at through due process by an approved review committee as described on the position paper.

TV AND INTERNET CONTROL DEVICES – 2005 (U-'98, R-'91, R-'84); **1.** Urge PTA units to educate their members as to the availability of parent control devices for both TV and the Internet.

X Parent and Family Life

CHILD CARE SERVICES – 2010 (U-'03, R-'96, R-'89, R-'82); **1.** Encourage units and councils to have programs addressing the need for child care, including school age child care, in their communities and to share guidelines on quality child care with parents. **2.** Urge the state legislature to address the need to encourage home child care providers to register and to provide training programs for all child care providers to order to reduce turnover and improve quality of care. **3.** Encourage the state legislature to address the different needs of families for accessible child care by providing incentives for more infant slots, increased salaries for child care workers, and further incentives for business and other organizations to start quality programs.

ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY PREVENTION – 2007 (R-'00, R-'93, U-'86); **1.** The NYS PTA and its local units focus on the prevention of unintended adolescent pregnancy, recognizing the need for involving parents and uniting their efforts with school and community resources. **2.** Support implementation of family-life curricula in every school, emphasizing the importance of parent participation. **3.** NYS PTA highlight and publish information about family life programs that achieve good results. **4.** Support funding for school-based health clinics which will provide comprehensive health care and counseling to adolescents and whatever pregnancy prevention services deemed appropriate by the local community.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN POVERTY – 2007 (R-'00, R-'93, R-'86); **1.** Cooperate with agencies and organizations which advocate for children and youth in poverty. **2.** Support local, state and federal legislation to alleviate isolation of the socioeconomic disadvantaged through specific programs such as more available day care, flexible work hours for quality parenting and other beneficial actions.

XI Pre-School and Early Childhood Education

STRENGTHENING THE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM – 2006 (U-'99, R-'92, R-'85); **1.** Encourage its units and councils to urge school districts to strengthen the kindergarten program with full day and developmentally appropriate programs taught by highly qualified teachers. **2.** Encourage the New York State Education Department to disseminate information by which school districts with full day kindergartens may evaluate their program. **3.** Encourage the New York State Education Department to engage in research to determine the effectiveness of full day kindergarten programs. **4.** Advocate for full funding for full day kindergarten programs, staffing and facilities.

BAN OF STANDARDIZED TESTING OF YOUNG CHILDREN – 2005 (R-'98, R-'91); **1.** Urge local school districts to stop the mass use of standardized tests from pre-school through second grade (with the exception of mandated bilingual and certain special education testing). **2.** Urge local school districts to develop and replace standardized tests below the third grade with alternative assessment methods that go by various names (authentic, appropriate, performance-based and direct) and will provide useful data and genuine accountability. **3.** Urge that the SED, State Board of Regents, State Legislature, and local school districts NOT call for new or additional standardized tests below the third grade and NOT rely on existing standardized tests below the third grade as indicators of educational progress. **4.** Urge councils and local units to provide information to parents about developmentally appropriate alternative means of assessment.

XII PTA Organizational Decisions

VOLUNTEERISM – 2009 (R-'02, R-'95, R-'88); **1.** Support an amendment to the Internal Revenue Code to allow volunteers the same standard of deduction for their mileage rate as that used by business people in computing their expense deduction.

FUNDRAISING POSITION – 2005 (R-'98); **1.** Seek to prevent the exploitation of children through PTA fundraising. **2.** Children and youth should never sell door-to-door for PTA. **3.** Children and youth should never be offered prize incentives for fundraising. **4.** Educate units and councils about the dangers involved in fundraising practices which utilize children in the generation of sales and revenue. **5.** Re-examine all PTA fundraising practices as to whether those activities promote PTA's objects and purposes.

XIII Religious Expression In Public Schools

SCHOOL PRAYER AMENDMENT – 2004 (R-'97, R-'90, R-'83); **1.** NYS PTA oppose a constitutional school prayer amendment.

XIV Safety

CHANGE IN THE VEHICLE TRAFFIC LAW PERTAINING TO STOPPED SCHOOL BUSES – 2010 (R-'03, R-'96); **1.** Support programs to raise the awareness of dangerous traffic situations at school bus stops. **2.** Seek and support legislation to prevent a vehicle from making turns toward a school bus while it is discharging or receiving passengers to change the law to read "any" where it now reads "either" in section 1174(a) Vehicle and Traffic Law. **3.** Seek and support legislation to prohibit the establishment of bus stops at intersections or within 100 feet of intersections unless the Board of Education adopts a resolution indicating that an intersection location is unavoidable.

MANDATED FIRE DRILLS – 2010 (R-'03, U-'96, R-'89); **1.** Urge the SED to consider amending the requirement of mandated fire drills so that at least one drill occurs annually during non-classroom situations, and before/after school instructions for all building occupants.

MONITORS ON SCHOOL BUSES – 2010 (U-'03, R-'96, R-'89, U-'82); **1.** Encourage its local units to sponsor campaigns within their school districts to have money allocated in school budgets to pay the expenses incurred for hiring and training monitors. **2.** Continue to encourage the State Legislature to consider bus monitors an integral part of transporting children to and from school and, therefore, an "aidable" transportation cost.

SCHOOL BUS STOP VULNERABILITY – 2009 (U-'02, U-'01, R-'94); **1.** Encourage PTA units and councils to mount a campaign to raise awareness of student vulnerability at school bus stops. **2.** Continue to educate parents and students in school bus safety and make parents aware that they are responsible for monitoring and protecting their children until the school bus arrives at the stop and the red lights begin to flash. **3.** Support legislation protecting the rights of children waiting at school bus stops.

PENALTIES FOR PASSING A STOPPED SCHOOL BUS – 2009 (R-'02, R-'95, R-'88); **1.** Seek stronger enforcement of the existing law that requires all vehicles to stop and not pass a stopped school bus when its red lights are flashing.

ADULT SUPERVISION – 2009 (R-'02, R-'95, R-'88); **1.** PTA units and councils urge their local school boards to provide adequate adult supervision of children during lunch and recess and that a minimum of one adult be assigned to each area where such activities are taking place.

HORSEBACK RIDING SAFETY – 2009 (U-'02, R-'98, R-'91); **1.** Support stronger legislation to enact a riding safety code for operators of horseback riding facilities which would include, but not be limited to, the use of protective helmets and safety instruction to reduce the chance of injury.

SCOOTER, SKATEBOARD AND IN-LINE SKATING PROTECTIVE GEAR – 2008 (U'01, R-'95, U-'90); **1.** Encourage each unit and council to promote educational programs concerning the need for skateboard and in-line skating protective gear (which includes a helmet, elbow pads, knee pads and wrist guards). **2.** Urge the Board of Regents to update safety education requirements to include the importance of scooter, skateboard and in-line skating protective gear. **3.** Encourage each unit and council to urge physicians, manufacturers and sales personnel to educate and encourage parents, guardians and children in the use of scooter, skateboard and in-line skating protective gear. **4.** Encourage its units and councils to advocate for regulations within their communities to control the use of scooter, skateboard and in-line skates on public streets and in areas of busy pedestrian activity and to advocate for specially designed skateboard and in-line skating areas to serve as an alternative to using the street. **5.** Support measures that would require that the scooter, skateboard and in-line skating helmets and other protective gear be subject to performance standards to be developed by an appropriate agency.

GUN POSSESSION BY MINORS – 2008 (U-'01, R-'94, U-'87); **1.** Urge its units and councils to promote educational programs for increased awareness of current gun possession laws, including those precluding possession of air/spring guns by youth under age sixteen, and emphasizing the effects of misuse of guns.

DISCHARGING OF FIRE ARMS WITHIN SCHOOL AREAS – 2007 (R-'00, R-'93, R-'86); **1.** Seek and support legislation to amend section 265.35 of the NYS Penal Code to prohibit the discharge of firearms by any person other than exceptions listed in section 265.35 (of the NYS Penal Code) within one-half mile of any school property; urge local communities to enact similar legislation. **2.** Urge local cities, towns and villages to enact their own zoning ordinances which will not allow the discharge of firearms within 1/2 mile of school property.

BICYCLE HELMET LAW – 2006 (U-'99, R-'92, U-'89); **1.** Seek and support legislation that would require all persons who operate or are passengers on bicycles to wear bicycle helmets, and that existing law for infants under one year of age remain the same.

CHARTER BUS SAFETY – 2006 (U-'99, R-'92); **1.** Seek and support legislation that requires the Department of Motor Vehicles to retain all bus drivers' accident and moving violation records over

a ten year period of time. **2.** Seek and support legislation to increase civil penalties against bus companies for non-compliance with intra- and inter-state motor carrier laws. **3.** Seek and support legislation that requires seat belts on charter buses. **4.** Seek and support legislation that would require the superintendent of schools to obtain the charter bus company's records to approve the services of charter bus drivers and approve only drivers who meet the additional requirement of school bus driver certification, including fingerprinting and background checks. **5.** That the law requires the superintendent of schools to obtain a bus driver's inter- and intra- state accident and moving violation records before allowing them to drive buses transporting children. **6.** Urge local school districts to obtain bus drivers' inter- and intra- state accident and moving violation records before allowing them to drive buses transporting children.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY – 2006 (R-'99, R-'92); 1. Seek and support legislation which would make the School Bus Driver Safety program a part of the Education Law.

CHILDREN FIREARMS ACCIDENT PREVENTION LAW – 2006 (R-'99, U-'92); 1. Urge the NYS Legislature to seek and support legislation making parents and/or owners responsible for negligently stored firearms and ammunition.

IDENTIFYING UNSAFE SCHOOL CROSSINGS ON STATE OWNED ROADS – 2005 (R-'98); 1. Support the passage of legislation which would enable the Department of Transportation to expend funds on identified risk areas and for the purpose of erecting, maintaining and up-keeping of traffic signals on state, county and local roads.

TRAFFIC LIGHT INSTALLATION AT SCHOOLS WHICH ARE LOCATED ON STATE OWNED ROADS – 2004 (U-'97, R-'90); 1. Support the passage of legislation, which would enable the Dept. of Transportation (DOT) to expend funds for the installation and maintenance of traffic lights at schools which are located on state owned roads.

SEAT BELT USAGE ON SCHOOL BUSES – 2004 (R-'97, R-'90, R-'83); 1. Encourage its units and councils to support the use of seat belts on all school buses.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER 911 – 2004 (R-'97, R-'90, R-'83); 1. Urge its units, councils and districts to disseminate information to its members available from local police authorities regarding the emergency telephone number 911, both its proper use and precautions about misuse.

SAFETY ITEMS ON SCHOOL BUSES – 2004 (R-'97, R-'90, R-'83); 1. Urge school districts to purchase and/or contract for school buses with optional safety equipment such as stop arms and two-way radios.

YOUTH CAMP SAFETY – 2004 (R-'97, R-'90, R-'83); 1. Support the passage of a federal youth camp safety act.

CHANGE IN THE VEHICLE TRAFFIC LAW PERTAINING TO STOPPED SCHOOL BUSES – 2010 (R-'03, R-'96); 1. Support programs to raise the awareness of dangerous traffic situations at school bus stops. **2.** Seek and support legislation to prevent a vehicle from making turns toward a school bus while it is discharging or receiving passengers – to change the law to read "any" where it now reads "either" in section 1174(a) Vehicles and Traffic Law. **3.** Seek and support legislation to prohibit the establishment of bus stops at intersections or within 100 feet of intersections unless the Board of Education adopts a resolution indicating that an intersection location is unavoidable.

XV NYS PTA Position Papers

**PTA *POSITION PAPERS* REPRESENT THE RESEARCH OF THE
NEW YORK STATE PTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AND PROVIDE GUIDELINES ON ISSUES.
THEY ARE REVIEWED EVERY SEVEN YEARS.**



Position Paper: FINANCIAL LITERACY

Background – Where we are, the issue of financial illiteracy

There is considerable evidence that financial illiteracy has reached record proportions. Financial illiteracy has contributed significantly to a lower standard of living in general for many Americans. Financial illiteracy can result in poor saving, poor spending, excessive credit card use and bad investment decisions. The stress of financial insecurity can lead to divorce, suicide, domestic violence and other crimes. The recent 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. This is especially true for those whose primary language is not English.

The need/consequences

We face a rising crisis in our country with regard to financial literacy. The consequences are evidenced by rising numbers of bankruptcies, higher credit card debt and lower savings. The Federal Reserve reports that the typical family that files for bankruptcy owes more than one and one half times its annual income in short-term, high interest debt. Financial illiteracy crosses all economic boundaries from low-income to high-income families, and even well-educated, high-income adults may not know how to budget properly or manage their money well. The buying power of young adults is astronomical, estimated at \$150 billion annually for young people between the ages of 5 and 19. With the increased availability of on-line shopping and gambling, aggressive credit card solicitation, and email and phishing scams, our children have become a captive audience and easy victims. It is important to increase the financial knowledge and capability of all our students. To better navigate their financial futures and be prepared to make smart choices, students need to learn about earning and spending, saving and investing, using credit wisely, 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 education is a complex subject that requires sufficient training. Schools are teaching the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic so that our children can earn a good income, but they also need to teach the financial skills necessary to survive and thrive in today's society. 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 good 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 US and NYS Education Departments and local school districts to expand the scope of the existing curriculum at all levels P-16 and develop materials, guidelines and staff development to implement age-appropriate programs of instruction on personal financial literacy. Financial education should include components to help students develop an understanding of the appropriate skills relating to the roles of money, credit, budgets, financial planning and other relevant personal finance topics in order to permit them to understand and appropriately manage their finances.

PTAs can forge partnerships with schools and local community organizations such as banks and credit unions to offer 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 also tie financial literacy to other programs such as core critical thinking skills or Internet Safety to warn about phishing schemes and easy credit or "too good to be true" offers.

Topics for PTA awareness programs could include: school banking, allowances, savings and investments, part-time jobs, car loans, credit, insurance, paying for college, goal setting, bankruptcy, education level vs. expected income and money management skills for life after school on their own such as rent, utilities, cost

of cell phones, cable TV. PTA can also offer programs that can help parents work with their children to learn the necessary skills.

There are a wealth of online resources available that describe financial literacy standards, needs and programs. See the NYS PTA web site for a list of program ideas resource links.

Adopted: 7/10

Position Paper:
PARTNERS FOR HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Childhood obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century. The CDC reports that obesity among children aged 6 to 11 has more than doubled in the past 20 years and that the rate among adolescents aged 12 to 19 has more than tripled. New York State is experiencing an epidemic of childhood obesity with one in four children either overweight or obese. These children have higher rates of obesity-related diseases, like diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease; require more frequent and expensive medical care; and are likely to stay obese into adulthood. Yet obesity and related diseases remain largely preventable.

The fundamental causes of childhood obesity are a trend towards increased intake of energy-dense foods that are high in fat and sugars, but low in vitamins, minerals and other healthy micronutrients, and a trend towards decreased levels of physical activity. Conversely, healthy diets and adequate physical activity* are key to the promotion and maintenance of good health throughout one's lifetime, and as such, must be a high public health priority for parents, educators, and policy and law makers.

Establishing healthy behaviors among young people has proven more effective, and often easier, than efforts to change unhealthy behaviors already established among adults. At present, only 18 percent of American adults follow all three of the most important cardiovascular disease prevention measures: not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, and exercising regularly. In 2006, the United States spent more than any nation in the world on health care, and improving the health of its citizens would yield considerable economic benefit to our nation. It is easier and less costly to keep children healthy than to fix preventable health problems later in life.

Parents play an important role in a child's life as nurturers, teachers and role models. They control most food choices at home and their support encourages their children to be more physically active. Furthermore, when parents themselves model a healthy lifestyle, their children are more likely to perceive it as the norm for their own development.

As learning environments where children spend at least one-third of their day, schools also play a very important role in modeling healthy behaviors. Research shows that well-designed, well-implemented school programs can effectively promote students' physical activity and healthy eating. It has been found that, when given the option, students will buy and consume healthful foods and beverages, thus setting the stage for a lifetime of healthy nutritional habits. *In addition to the personal health advantages for students, schools that provide access to good nutrition and opportunities for physical activity benefit through improved academic performance, school attendance and student mood.* (Role of Schools in Reducing Obesity, www.nasbe.org)

In supporting parents' efforts to ensure their children's health, school policies and programs should foster the adoption of healthy diets and physical activities through changes in environment, behaviors and instruction. Aside from healthy school foods, schools should provide students with daily physical education and access to safe, appropriate facilities and equipment. Recognizing that schools play an integral part in child development, in 2004 the federal government passed a law requiring local school wellness policies, with implementation effective as of 2006. An effective school wellness policy is a working document, developed and implemented by school personnel, food service providers, students and parents. 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 create conditions that are conducive to health and help students develop the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions and practice healthy behaviors.
- The school food services environment (school cafeteria, à la cart foods, snack bars, vending machines) provides foods and beverages that are high in vitamins, minerals and other healthy micronutrients and low in fat, free sugar, cholesterol, sodium and calories; follow science-based nutritional standards for school foods and beverages; and comply with national dietary guidelines

for school-aged children. NYSPTA advocates the passage of legislation with the following key components:

- age-appropriate science-based standards that are periodically reviewed by health experts;
 - sufficient time to eat breakfast and lunch;
 - food or beverage never used as incentives or rewards;
 - additional funding for school meal programs and expansion of the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, as per NYS Council on Food Policy recommendations that school meal programs serve more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products;
 - a recess period for all elementary school children; no withholding of recess as 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.
- Healthy fundraisers are encouraged by school wellness policies and school/community activities.
 - Physical education and/or sports classes are provided and maintained for all students, grades K-12, according to NYS Education Department regulations:
 - All pupils in grades K-3 shall attend and participate in physical education on a daily basis for 120 minutes per week. Students attending half-day kindergarten should meet half the requirement.
 - All pupils in grades 4-6 shall attend and participate in physical education not less than three times per week for 120 minutes per week.
 - All pupils in grades 7-12 shall attend and participate in physical education for not less than three times per week in one semester, and not less than two times per week in the other semester 90 minutes per week.
 - A variety of physical education classes is offered to accommodate each student's age, gender, interests and needs. They should be enjoyable and developmentally appropriate and promote fair play and maximum participation of all students. With such physical activity, students develop the confidence and skills for lifelong physical fitness.
 - The undertaking or withholding of physical activity is not used as punishment.
 - Recess is a regularly scheduled period within the elementary school day that allows for unstructured physical activity, play, and social and cognitive development. Recently many school districts have eliminated recess due to safety concerns and the need for increased time for academic instruction ("No Child Left Behind" constraints).
 - Safety programs--like Safe Routes to School--are developed through the collaborative efforts of local PTA councils and units, community groups, municipalities, transportation services and traffic planners in order to create safe areas for cycling and walking; to advocate for policies promoting safe walking and cycling to and from school and community recreational facilities; and to create public awareness campaigns about student walking/cycling activity.
 - Communities offer a variety of extracurricular activities that enhance student participation and increase opportunities for cooperation among schools, students, parents and community organizations. Parents, educators and community members who participate in physical activities with children model good behavior and can build positive adult-child relationships.

Children will acquire healthy habits by consuming a diet of nutritional foods, increasing physical activity, and limiting the amount of time spent in sedentary activities like watching TV or playing video games. Yet to develop such habits, children must hear consistent messages from home and school. Effecting changes in children's dietary habits and patterns of physical activity will therefore require the combined efforts of many stakeholders, public and private. As partners in advocacy, parents, educators, and community members must teach and model the habits and behaviors of healthy living and must advocate to law and policy makers at all levels 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: to become healthy, active citizens.

- * According to U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Physical Activity Guidelines, children and adolescents should engage in at least 60 minutes daily of moderate and/or vigorous physical activity (aerobic, muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening activities).

Adopted 02/10



Position Paper: STANDARDS, TESTING AND THE WHOLE CHILD

New York State PTA recognizes the role academic learning standards play in setting educational goals. Standards can essentially be defined as descriptors of what students need to know, do and understand in order to either move to the next level of academic attainment or into the global workplace. According to the NYS Academy of Teaching and Learning, the NYS Board of Regents approved the introduction of learning standards in order that “children may expect an intellectually powerful education no matter where they live; in which teaching, assessment and the provision of supports for learning are to be closely linked; and in which schools and parents share the same high expectations of youngsters.”

Originally envisioned as learning guidelines or goals, standards consisted of objectives, tasks and assessments. Under the federal mandate of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), state assessments as prescribed by standards, have become the single indicator of achievement for federal accountability measures of student, school building and school district success. Through NCLB, standards have now taken on an even more vigorous meaning. NCLB has tipped the “balance” of objectives, tasks and assessments heavily toward standardized tests as the criteria for measuring a school’s annual yearly progress. When a dip, minor or significant, occurs in student scores and/or there is failure of a building or district to meet annual goals, the resulting consequences can have a profound impact on students, schools and the community.

In an effort to avert punitive consequences of “failure”, whether fiscal, operational and/or just negative media exposure, the pressure on school district staff to ratchet up the time spent on test preparation and remediation has sharply increased. According to a report by the Center on Educational Policy (CEP), school districts have needed to increase instructional time for English Language Assessments (ELA) and Math have done so at the expense of other subjects. Nationally, 44% of school districts have cut time from one or more subjects or activities at the elementary level, including science, social studies, art and music, physical education, lunch and recess. On average the cuts amounted to about 30 minutes a day. Overall, the decreases represent an average reduction of 31% in the total amount of instructional time devoted to these subjects. Additionally, media reports add that some administrators, feeling the pressure of increased testing requirements, can’t justify the time away from the classroom and curriculum and are either eliminating field trips or allowing only those that have a curricular connection.

Among the seven NYS Learning Standards is the Standard for the Arts. This provides school districts with direction and basic structure for developing curricula that will both integrate and advance arts education. Skills such as creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, memory, logic and social skills through communication, teamwork and esteem-building are honed through the disciplines of music, dance, theater and visual arts. Research demonstrates that the interplay of these skills with core academics fosters heightened student achievement and growth in all areas.

Balance is critical when considering the needs of the whole child. A whole-child approach recognizes the importance and value of all developmental facets in children – physical, social, emotional and academic. While there needs to be some measure of instructional accountability, there seems to be a growing over-reliance on standardized tests as indicators of achievement. Preoccupation with test performance can undermine student interest in learning and teacher creativity in delivering instruction, diminishing motivation and confidence for both. Increasing amounts of time are spent to boost fact learning, test taking strategies or to remediate post-test through support services, such as Academic Intervention Services (AIS). These activities engage the logical, literal mind and limit time to develop the artistic and creative mind. Students who are subjected to “drill and spill” teaching are more likely to shut down to instruction than those who have access to differentiated instruction as well as to broadening courses of the arts, music, social studies, science and physical education. Teaching a well-balanced curriculum, while allowing for physical activity and socialization, challenges and inspires learning and motivates everyone in the classroom, student and teacher alike.

There is a need to reshape or rebalance the concept of standards – what students need to know, do and understand. Within NCLB exists a standard for the Arts. It can be said that this standard yields to the undertow of performance measures for English and math. There needs to be greater attention paid to this. The greater the pressure to raise achievement scores, the greater is the pull from subjects and activities that

stimulate different pathways to learning. Whether referring to art, music, foreign language, field trips or recess – these ALL contribute to preparing the whole child academically, socially and for civic participation.

Succeeding in the global marketplace requires skills that move beyond information storage to conceptualization. There will be an ever-increasing need to more creatively utilize the technology that exists. The combination of best classroom practices and supports for integrating disciplines provides for enriched curriculum which will promote both a balance and connection between content skills and conceptual skills. Instead of more test preparation to reach standards, standards need to be rebalanced to prepare students for life.

Adopted 8/08



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 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



Position Paper: NYS PTA AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

Public education has been in existence since the 1600s 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’ 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. With the establishment of a statewide Parent Advisory Council (PAC) to support public and charter schools, parents, teachers, and students, the 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



Position Paper: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The New York State Congress of Parents & Teachers, Inc. believes that 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, NYS PTA believes that 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; first the school community and then the community at large. Early education for young children, especially ages 3-8, must include the social/emotional skills, physical skills, as well as academics to ensure that education and life skills include the whole child. It is especially important that parents and guardians be an integral part of the early childhood education program to assist in goal setting; therefore, a parent involvement policy should be part of the required mandates of the Regent's policy on Early Childhood Education.

Enhancing the opportunities for children to read, write, and learn math and science in the early years will increase the skills needed for successful student achievement. This can be effectively accomplished if young children learn to love learning, especially reading.

It is essential to consider the social-emotional component in any plan for early childhood education. The child needs to learn communication skills, how to get along with others, and to learn the necessary and proper school behaviors to become a competent member of society. We therefore recommend that the policy increases the guidance support staff to assist in this aspect of development. We need to teach children how to be comfortable in the education environment, and professionals in psychology and guidance are trained in this area.

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

NYS PTA advocates for full funding for these programs, for professional development of teachers, and for parent-involvement programs in all school districts.

Important Points within the Regents policy:

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

NYS PTA not only agrees with this necessary component but encourages that our organization be a part of the training, not only for parents of young children, but also extended to parents of children from birth through age 21. We advocate for a mandated parent-involvement policy to be developed jointly by the NYSED and the NYS PTA that includes training to parents on how to communicate and partner with the schools and the education community at large.

****Establish universal pre-kindergarten statewide in all public school districts.**

NYS PTA wholeheartedly agrees that this component is necessary and that it be a part of the policy. We would like the funds needed to be mandated as part of the state budget in order to provide the best supports for young children. This would include the academic needs, the social-emotional needs, and the physical needs of children. We would like the option of a parent (guardian) opting out for one year, if the child is developmentally not ready for a full-time program. We recommend that a mandated screening be established, that is based upon scientific research, to assist in determining the needs of and goals for each individual child.

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

NYS PTA believes that there should be consistency for children who are already in a school setting because of special education needs, and having the transition for them at age five into the public setting would be beneficial in transferring supports as needed into their neighborhood school. This would allow parents to transition easily into the needed parent-involvement component of public schools. Research shows that the

earlier that a parent is involved in the school environment, the higher the level of student achievement. The funds for schools should be increased in the state budget to cover the costs of an earlier entrance into school. We believe that because the academics are increasing, that the entrance into school at age five would be beneficial. We believe that there should be complete screening to see if the child is developmentally ready for a full time program, and that the “cutoff” date could be changed accordingly.

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

NYS PTA supports the requirement for full-day kindergarten. Many children need a transitional period to adjust to a full day of school, especially those who have never been in school or have been in school only one or two mornings a week. A process needs to be established for these children to enter school initially on a part-time basis, and then transition to full time. Transportation, adequate funding, and highly qualified teachers with support staff need to be included in this full time kindergarten plan.

****Strengthen pre-kindergarten through grade 3 programs by ensuring the use of research-based strategies in ways that are appropriate to the age and development of children.**

NYS PTA believes in using scientifically-based reading and writing programs and to have data on children’s progress so that parents can help in the strategies of learning. The reports, the programs and the strategies need to be written in a complete, concise and easy to access method so that all parents can participate. This should include translation of materials into other languages if needed.

****Increase support to students with disabilities (SWD) through earlier access to inclusive educational settings.**

NYS PTA believes that we should give access to inclusive programs to SWD but that for some cases, the self-contained programs are still needed and should be available. This change into an only inclusive setting should never be an all or nothing approach. The individual child must be viewed as a whole child with strengths and weaknesses, and a full discussion of those factors must be completed before any child is placed into an inclusive setting. The parent must be fully involved in this determination and should be included since they have relevant information on whether their child can be placed in the inclusive setting or needs to be transitioned into the setting at a later time. Tests and assessments should also reflect those individual needs as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the child in the academic, social-emotional and physical environment of the school setting.

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

NYS PTA believes that parents are the first and most enduring teachers for their children. They are their child’s best advocates and supporters and need to be an integral part of the school system. This can be accomplished by having meaningful participation in schools through shared decision-making teams and membership on other policy committees.

****Expand collaborative efforts by leveraging the resources of community organizations that offer comprehensive services, including health and nutrition.**

NYS PTA recognizes that many community organizations can and should be available as resources for parents and children in schools. If services can be provided by outside organizations, including screenings for children (i.e. Lighthouse for screening eye disorders, dental groups to screen for problems with teeth, screening for lead poisoning), training seminars on how to be knowledgeable of the total child, more parents would access these fine resources and this would add to the community support for the school district.

****Review alignment of State Standards, curriculum and assessment in prekindergarten through grade 3.**

NYS PTA agrees that curriculum used within the state education system for all grade levels must be aligned with the state standards in order to assure that children are prepared for the required academics, and can be successful students and adults in the community. This alignment will ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve a diploma and go onto higher education and/or the workforce. The education for a child needs to be viewed as a complete process from birth through adulthood.

****Work with institutions of higher education to focus the preparation and training of prekindergarten through grade 3 teachers and administrators on the developmental and academic needs of young children.**

NYS PTA agrees that there should be good preparation and training of all teachers but that it is not necessary to limit teachers to qualify for only pre-K to grade 3; rather that certification include pre-K to grade 6.

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

NYS PTA supports the need for librarians and reading specialists to work on early childhood programs in order to develop relevant skills in the young child. We encourage that the Parents as Reading Partners (PARP) and the Reflections Arts in Education programs be included as available resources for early childhood education.

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

NYS PTA supports the full funding of prekindergarten and full-day kindergarten if the programs become part of the mandates for early childhood education. We support the full funding of teacher training, and for parent involvement to support the early childhood programs in the State.

NYS PTA believes that the Regent's revised policy on Early Childhood Education is comprehensive but that the policy must have a meaningful parent involvement piece which includes training, increased communication and partnerships between the parents and school districts. For every young child, there is a parent or guardian who is working for success of that child, and without that parent, the child does not have the best opportunity to achieve. Every child in NYS needs a good start.

Adopted 8/06



Position Paper:

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN POVERTY: THE PUBLIC SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY

Poverty and doing poorly in school often go hand-in-hand. Children and youth who do poorly in school often do not finish their education. They become less employable. They are more apt to become a social burden and are more apt to perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

1. Children and youth in poverty frequently live in cities or rural areas, and where there is a high concentration of poor families. Schools with a higher poverty level tend to have lower achievement statistics. These school districts often do not have local resources to provide anything more than minimal services for their low achieving population.
2. Children and youth in poverty often receive fewer educational resources; are taught in overcrowded, dilapidated surroundings; and are sometimes taught by less-qualified teachers who maintain lower expectations, use developmentally and culturally inappropriate curricular materials, and have little resource or time or energy to address the needs of these children and youth.
3. Many children and youth are educationally disadvantaged. One in five public school students in the State of New York live in poverty. Lower performing schools tend to have higher concentrations of minority students and children and youth in poverty.

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 policy to protect children and youth from discriminatory discipline or educational placement;
3. Develop and recommend budgets that equitably allocate resources for all programs and in all schools within the school district;
4. Set policies to provide information to parents regarding the educational program of their children and youth and to provide for parental input in the decision-making processes;
5. Develop programs to meet the needs of all children and youth keeping high expectations for each child;
6. Develop and monitor individual student achievement with sensitivity to individual learning modes, cultural and economic backgrounds.

Expect principals to:

1. Structure the school's organization and encourage the teaching staff to address the many different learning situations for the 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 are educationally disadvantaged;
3. Provide and support opportunities for parents to understand their responsibilities for their children's education;
4. Develop active outreach programs to include parents of children and youth in poverty and of emancipated youth.

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 student diversity;
4. Communicate with parents on a regular basis and encourage their cooperation.

Encourage parents to:

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

Call upon legislators to:

1. Provide equitable distribution of funds, employing the “leveling up” concept;
2. Provide financial incentives to maintain funding for successful programs and maintain the physical plant to meet the program needs;
3. Urge an increase in federal dollars to supplement and not supplant state and local intervention programs.

Adopted 11/87
Reaffirmed 11/91
Reaffirmed 2/00
Reaffirmed 8/06

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

In 1975, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) was passed. This was updated in 1990 and called 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. Prior to the passage of this federal law, many children with disabilities were excluded from the public schools. IDEA guaranteed that children with disabilities could no longer be denied a free, appropriate education.

IDEA states that the education of children with disabilities must be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Each public agency shall insure 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.

A student would be placed in an educational setting based on his or her individualized education program (IEP) and as close as possible to the child’s home. “Unless a disabled child’s individual education program requires some other arrangement, the child is educated in the school which he or she would attend if not disabled; and in selecting the least restrictive environment, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services which he or she needs.”

As a result of the least restrictive environment provision in IDEA, two practices have evolved: mainstreaming and inclusion. Mainstreaming means placing students who have been in self-contained classrooms into regular classes for most or all of the school day. Additional services may be provided by a consultant teacher or by pullout programs. Students are placed in the regular classroom with the expectation that they will be able to maintain similar academic progress with their non-disabled peers in the class.

Inclusion is a philosophy that defines inclusive education as: providing to all students, including those with severe disabilities, 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 the society. Inclusion differs from the mainstreaming philosophy in that students with special needs 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 accepts the opportunity and the responsibility to advocate for the educational needs of all children. Within the population of students with disabilities there is a wide range of needs from mild to severe. Academic expectations should increase for all students as they progress from primary through secondary school.

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, with parents 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



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 need to use the 3 to 1 rule: that there should be at least three non-fundraising projects aimed at helping parents and children or advocacy for every one fundraising event." 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. There are other organizations which exist primarily for the purpose of raising funds for the needs of children and youth.

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.

Use of Funds

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

Funds used wisely and only to advance the purposes and goals of PTA will be funds well spent.

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 fundraising committee should plan to raise the difference between the income from the local portion of membership dues and the proposed expenditures. The committee's plan of work must be approved by the executive board.

For many PTAs, the best solution is a single annual fundraising project. One well-planned event will usually raise the necessary funds to finance the year's activities. If the project is to reflect the high principles of the organization, it will be educational, social or recreational. Often a project that seems to be simply for entertainment can serve an educational purpose by raising the standard of entertainment in the community or by giving the community a concept of the constructive use of leisure time.

The following questions may be used as guidelines in selecting and planning a money-raising project that will be both successful and worthy of the PTA:

1. *Can the fun raiser be justified by the Purposes of PTA?*
If the reason for the fundraiser can not be easily justified by one of the Purposes of PTA, it should not be considered.
2. *Does it conform to the basic policies stated in your bylaws?*
The basic policies require that PTA be noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan. 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)
3. *Will it create good will for the PTA, enlisting the participation of many persons and creating a spirit of comradeship?*
A fundraising event can be a means of creating a sense of community and of attracting advocates for children.
4. *If children take part in the project, have their welfare and safety been considered with utmost care?*
A fundraising event should not take advantage of children's willingness and inexperience and should avoid pressuring them. 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 school work or a constructive leisure time activity. **PTA must not exploit children.**

5. *Is it an activity that serves as an example for children and youth and reinforces their pride in their parents and teachers?*
Fundraising events should be selected with care, reflecting the moral sense and attitudes in the community.
6. *Are school regulations with regard to fire laws and safety precautions strictly observed when the project is held in a school building?*
Prior to the event all safety factors such as maximum capacity, fire exits, accessibility for the handicapped, etc., should be reviewed with the appropriate authorities. Fundraising events held elsewhere should be held to the same scrutiny.
7. *Do local, state, or federal laws, State Education Department regulations, and New York State Constitution 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. Since the problems vary so much from community to community and are so dependent on the type of activity involved, it might be well for a PTA to discuss the proposed fundraising project with appropriate PTA region board members and local officials. Some fundraising events may be questionable. *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.*
8. *Can a unit, council or Region accept sponsorship as a source of raising funds?*
Sponsorship must be aligned with the purposes of PTA. Companies that provide goods or services in conflict with PTA purposes, resolutions or positions should not be accepted.
9. *May an individual PTA member accept gifts or incentives in consideration for partnering with a company?*
Gifts and/or incentives are not appropriate. PTA fundraising activities should not be a source of personal gain for any child or adult.

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. Working to secure adequate funding for programs has a more enduring benefit than purchasing items of equipment. The purchasing of school equipment and the payment of school staff salaries are the responsibility of school administration and school boards. In only the most severe and extenuating circumstances should exceptions be made, and then to be restricted to the crisis of the moment.

PTA energies 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. PTA may at times find it necessary to initiate a pilot project to demonstrate the value of a program or purchase equipment that entails fundraising.

Before the PTA takes any action to provide a pilot project, the PTA should carefully evaluate the project with guidance from its PTA Region. A thorough investigation of all the ramifications of the project should be made in conjunction with the administration (refer to *Education Law*) to determine that the pilot project is supportive of the school's program and that it will be an integral part of the curriculum.

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. *PTAs should not be expected to fill the gaps in school budgets.*

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 anticipated amount.

Adopted 11/84
Reaffirmed 11/90
Reaffirmed 8/98
Reaffirmed 8/06



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: 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 Learning Standards for the Arts reflect the educational goals that are common to dance, music, theater, and the visual arts while recognizing the distinct aspect of each discipline. Visual arts foster self esteem, problem solving skills, clarity of expression (the forerunner of communication), critical thinking through evaluating the works of others and personal satisfaction. Playing a musical instrument develops team effort, and improves memory, logic and general creativity. Dance and theater hone skills in self-discipline, expression, concentration and poise.

These important skills will enable students to achieve success in all phases and subjects of their complete education. The following list emphasizes the goals set by the Department of Education, recognizing the importance of a multifaceted arts education.

New York State Learning Standards for the Arts

1. *Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts* – Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performances in the arts (dance, music, theater and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts;
2. *Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources* – Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles;
3. *Responding To and Analyzing Works of Art* – Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting individual works to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought;
4. *Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts* – Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

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 assure a successful outcome for all students. It is important that school districts set curricula that support arts' goals and that teachers promote these goals in their instruction. 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. However, teachers and administrators cannot shoulder the burden of gaining support for arts programs alone.

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

- *Keep consistent communication with local, region and state PTAs;*
- *Build an art advocacy team with other parents, colleagues, arts councils, museums, university arts faculty, and community members. Send a unified message;*
- *Understand the status of arts education in your school, community and state. 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, you become an informed advocate;*
- *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 Visual 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 art, music, theater and dance teachers.*

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

Adopted 11/98
Reaffirmed 8/06



Position Paper: NYS LEARNING STANDARDS

New York State PTA supports the ongoing efforts of the New York State Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department in establishing and maintaining high academic standards. To date, improvement in student achievement has not only been impressive but has extended across racial and ethnic lines and also across income levels. The alignment of high academic standards with curriculum and assessments gives students the education necessary for today's world and creates a high school diploma that has meaning.

The following statements represent comments and concerns based on the New York State PTA's *Basic Policy, Education Emphasis*. New York State PTA, its units, councils and regions, will advocate to:

- Guarantee for all children and youth an equal opportunity to develop to their fullest potential
 - 1) Consistent standards are necessary to assure equal access to a quality curriculum for all children;
 - 2) Parents, teachers, and administrators should urge every child to achieve the highest level of academic performance possible;
 - 3) Every school district must be held accountable for its delivery of services to all students at all levels;
 - 4) Continued emphasis on parent involvement is an integral part of the success of the Learning Standards Initiative;
 - 5) Parents and guardians of students should be provided with comprehensive academic data that empowers them to make informed choices on behalf of their children;
 - 6) School district and state compliance to close the academic equity gap among races and income differences must be monitored;
 - 7) Individual student academic skills must be evaluated for the purpose of targeting effective, skills-appropriate instructional programs.
- Promote implementation of higher standards for all levels of public education
 - 1) New York State PTA continues to support the Learning Standards Initiative as criteria for graduation;
 - 2) All students must continue to have access to Regents level courses and high school level curriculum;
 - 3) Curriculum and assessments must be constantly reviewed to ensure their alignment with the Learning Standards and each other;
 - 4) All school districts must be accountable for the opportunities available to students, e.g. offering many alternative instructional methods and materials including Academic Intervention Services.
- Provide opportunities for academic, vocational, and technical education through and beyond the secondary level
 - 1) New York State PTA again expresses its support and appreciation of the NYS Board of Regents Standards Initiative and in no way would support the dilution of high school graduation criteria for any student;
 - 2) New York State PTA supports meaningful component retesting and alternative assessments that provide valuable information on academic achievement and are based on the NYS Learning Standards. We also support, until all other components are in place, the continuation of the 55-passing grade;
 - 3) New York State PTA asks the New York State Board of Regents to consider alternatives to five specific Regents examinations as the only possible criteria for graduation;
 - 4) New York State PTA recognizes that governance of graduation criteria is a state rather than local responsibility and any alternative forms of diplomas must be consistent throughout the state;

- 5) Institutions of higher learning should be encouraged to work with students in areas of need identified during high school to help ensure post secondary academic success, e.g. remediation courses, GED programs, etc.

Adopted 08/03
Reaffirmed 8/06

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