

Basic Policy 2020-2021

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

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

- a) Encourage and support evidence-based prevention, education and treatment efforts regarding alcohol, heroin, opioids and other substance use.
- b) Support measures to eliminate access and use among children and youth of herbal smoking products, tobacco, e-cigarettes, e-liquid, and nicotine.
- c) Advocate for the elimination of flavored vaping and e-cigarette products, and banning their marketing to youth.
- d) Support Tobacco 21 educational initiatives.
- e) Oppose the legalization of recreational marijuana.

Citizenship and Equality of Opportunity

- a) Encourage respect for all children, families, and community members, and their property.
- b) Encourage fair housing policies with regard to children and their families.
- c) Guarantee that all children and youth receive equitable access to educational programs, services, and opportunities.
- d) Promote the availability of resources to ensure a safe and inclusive school and community environment for all children and families.

Cooperative Role of Parents/Families and Educational Professionals

- a) Encourage parents and families to be informed of and engaged in the decision-making process at all levels.
- b) Support the inclusion of family engagement provisions in federal and state legislation, policies, and regulations with dedicated funding.
- c) Ensure adoption of comprehensive and collaborative family engagement policies at the school district and building level.
- d) Promote family engagement best practices based on National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.

Cultural Arts

- a) Advocate for and promote arts education programs, and the integration of the arts in school curricula to promote public awareness of the life-long value of the arts.

Early Childhood Education

- a) Promote and support high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool and kindergarten programs with sustained equitable support.
- b) Continue to ban the administration of standardized testing for preschool through grade 2 children.
- c) Encourage use of developmentally appropriate (non-standardized) alternative assessment methods for preschool through grade 2 children.

Education Emphasis

- a) Guarantee all children and youth an equal opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.
- b) Promote the implementation of developmentally appropriate standards and assessments.
- c) Ensure students' opportunities for academic and career and technical education through the post-secondary level.
- d) Ensure identification and appropriate education of all students (including students with special needs, gifted and talented students, English Language Learners, diverse student populations), with appropriate notification to parents and/or guardians.
- e) Promote full access to education for unaccompanied minors, migrant, and homeless children and youth.

Environment

- a) Insist that all school property be environmentally safe and provide a healthy learning environment.
- b) Insist that all members of the school community have a "right to know" about environmental health issues and hazards in their school environment.
- c) Encourage schools and communities to model environmentally responsible behavior.
- d) Promote awareness of the impact of potentially hazardous and toxic substances.
- e) Encourage state and federal funding of environmentally responsible programs.
- f) Support legislation that sets standards to protect groundwater supplies and limit air, water, and soil contaminants.

Financial Support for Public Education

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

Health

- a) Support comprehensive health, wellness, and safety education.
- b) Promote the accessibility of comprehensive physical and mental health, and social-emotional services in schools and communities.
- c) Promote and collaborate on wellness and healthy lifestyle initiatives within the school and community.
- d) Encourage accurate and transparent labeling of consumer goods.
- e) Promote quality age-appropriate nutrition programs and standards reliant on research-based scientific evidence.
- f) Urge that the food supply be grown and produced free of harmful substances or genetic modifications, and without the overuse or misuse of harmful or toxic chemicals, drugs, and other substances.
- g) Promote education on Health Care Privacy laws for youth and young adults.

Juvenile Protection

- a) Support full funding and implementation of Raise the Age laws and regulations.
- b) Promote improvement of juvenile justice and court facilities, educational conditions, personnel, and procedures that deal with youth at risk, including delinquent, neglected, and abused children.
- c) Support services and programs that provide assistance to families in stress/crisis situations.
- d) Seek and support the provision of safe care and educational opportunities for children in all environments.
- e) Seek and support the protection of children from threats and negative influences.
- f) Secure appropriate measures to prevent the incidence of missing and abused children.

Libraries, Media and Technology

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

Parent and Family Life

- a) Encourage a supportive and nurturing family environment at home and in the community.
- b) Promote parent and family educational programs.
- c) Provide all parents and families with the necessary knowledge and skills to be engaged and act as advocates for children.

PTA Organizational Decisions

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

Religious Expression in Public Schools

- a) Ensure that the public school approach to religion is consistent with the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution and related Supreme Court decisions, relevant case law, and precedent addressing the separation of church and state.

Safety

- a) Support and advocate for the safety of children in the home, school, and community environments.
- b) Advocate for safe infrastructure, modes of transportation, and safe routes to/from school.
- c) Promote awareness and advocate for the elimination of hazards and risks, in both real and digital worlds, for children and youth.
- d) Advocate for collaborative school safety and security plans, processes, and measures for every school district and school building.