

2019-2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

New York State PTA advocates for all children and youth from birth through post-secondary education. Legislative Priorities, adopted by the NYS PTA Board of Directors at the annual pre-convention meeting, lists annual advocacy priorities. Legislative Priorities may be amended by the NYS PTA Board of Directors as social conditions and government policies necessitate additional response and action.

NYS PTA's 2019-2020 Legislative Priorities are:

Support for Public Education:

- Support funding and reforms that provide equal and equitable access to high quality education, delivered by highly qualified staff, and prepare all children for college, career and citizenry;
- Update the Foundation Aid Formula to reflect current school conditions and needs, including updating the Costing Out Study to determine the appropriate foundation aid amount per pupil, updating student need factors, and updating and restructuring the Regional Cost Index;
- Support targeted funding to assist schools in receivership, support English Language Learners, strengthen mental health services and safety, and expand learning opportunities for children;
- Modify the tax cap to better reflect the fiscal realities of schools, by providing an “allowable levy growth factor” of at least 2 percent, implementing adjustments related to BOCES capital improvements and PILOT properties, amending the carryover provision, and eliminating the supermajority requirement, all of which disregard uncontrollable costs, create greater educational inequities, and limit local determination of educational opportunity;
- Support legislation that would change the method of funding charter schools to eliminate any adverse impact on existing school districts and ensure charter school accountability;
- Oppose all unfunded mandates;
- Oppose the diversion of public funds from public schools for vouchers and tuition tax credits;
- Support fiscal independence for the Big Five City school districts;
- Support adequate funding for school districts to provide continuing professional development for educators;
- Support adequate, predictable, and equitable funding for all school districts that includes continued funding for maintenance and modernization of school facilities, and funding for general school operations that honors past funding commitments;
- Support full funding for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and all other federal laws affecting the education of children and youth in New York State;
- Support full day kindergarten in New York State and adequate equitable and assured funding for pre-K and full day kindergarten;
- Support efforts to maintain optimal class size for instruction at all levels;

- Urge NYSED to offer meaningful diploma options for all students who cannot successfully fulfill current Regents requirements, or do not qualify for the new Superintendents Determination or other safety net options;
- Support meaningful local adoption and implementation of restorative practices in school buildings;
- Strengthen College and Career Pathways, and update the caps on aid for BOCES salaries and Special Services Aid in Big Five city school districts, which have not been updated since 1990;
- Support funding and services for Part 154 regulation implementation;
- Support expansion and implementation of Farm to Market programs for heightened school nutrition;
- Support system-wide adoption of Breakfast After the Bell; and
- Support adequate ratios for school-related professionals, including, but not limited to, school counselors, licensed clinical social workers, school nurses, and other support personnel.

Safe and Nurturing Environments:

- Support healthy children and youth evidenced based initiatives, including those addressing mental, emotional and physical health needs;
- Support services and programs for child and student alcohol, tobacco and other substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery initiatives;
- Support legislation that regulates the manufacture, marketing, and use of electronic cigarettes and other vaping devices;
- Support a ban on flavored tobacco related products, including menthol and mint flavors;
- Oppose the legalization of recreational marijuana;
- Support initiatives that foster a supportive school climate;
- Support policies and initiatives that engage home, school, and community in violence prevention planning and measures;
- Support quality, affordable, accessible school-based before-school and after-school programs;
- Support initiatives to require the use of three-point harness seat belts on all school buses;
- Advocate for improved child nutrition, including prevention of obesity and eating disorders, and healthful levels of physical activity;
- Support legislation and regulations that limit a student's exposure to foods and beverages containing pesticide-tolerant GMOs, and GE foods;
- Support legislation, policies and regulations that protect children and youth when using the Internet, wireless devices, and other forms of electronic communications, and the use of their personal data;
- Support initiatives that foster a school environment free of toxic substances;
- Support funding and services for Raise the Age implementation; and
- Support legislation, policies and regulations that minimize student exposure to dangers posed by multi-lane highways, and bus stop locations.

Parent and Family Engagement:

- Support adoption of New York State Family Engagement Standards;
- Support representation of NYS PTA as one of the parent voices on statewide and local interagency parent and family cabinets/councils; and
- Support the development and implementation of effective parent and family engagement plans as required under the Every Student Succeeds Act.