

# **2010-2011 Legislative Actions and Priorities**

## ***Priorities***

- Elections for School Board Members and Budget Approval shall be held annually at a time other than the Primary and General Elections.
- Continue to support maximum local control of fundamental education and fiscal decisions with voter approval, where applicable.
- Provide programs to educate parents and children about the consequences of childhood obesity and the importance of healthy eating habits and physical activities including school recess.
- Ensure that any state formula provides adequate funding for public school education in all districts so that every child's needs are met.
- Communicate with federal legislators as to the importance of retaining strong parental and community engagement provisions in legislation reauthorizing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and National PTA Parental Engagement Initiatives.
- Advocate for appropriate legislation and educate students, parents, educators, and communities to the dangers associated with the internet, wireless, and other electronic communications.
- Support and promote legislation and programs that encourage acceptable behavior by all students and discourages ALL FORMS of bullying, i.e., text messaging, cellular, cyber, including instant messaging.
- Continue to take an active role in opposing non-public school vouchers and other initiatives that would divert public funds to non-public schools.
- Support the renewal of federal legislation which continues the State Children's Health Insurance Program for uninsured children who do not qualify for Medicaid.
- Educate parents to the negative and addictive effects of the violence in video games and other media that desensitizes children/youth to the value of human and animal life and support efforts to limit their access.
- Make parents aware of the presence of hormones and other additives in our foods, especially milk and the suspected health risks associated with them.
- Monitor legislation changes to the Teen Driver's requirements to ensure that any changes to the law be fair to all.
- Continue to monitor state reorganization and consolidation issues.
- Support legislation that requires school districts to have a safety plan for students on day and overnight trips.
- Monitor and support the enforcement of bicycle helmet safety laws.
- Support Legislation and regulations regarding use of Cadmium in children's jewelry and other children's products.
- Support legislation that would stop the unnecessary use of restraints and seclusion in the school.

## ***Continuing Actions***

### **Education**

- Continue to work on the federal level for full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Support character education in schools to develop core ethical values and civic virtue.
- Continue to support funding of the arts in education.
- Monitor the enforcement of the state legislation that returns the Burden of Proof in Special Education court cases to the local school district.

### **Health**

- Educate parents and children and youth to the dangerous health risk of second hand smoke.
- Support legislation and regulations to assure a healthy environment for children through air quality standards and eliminate the use of hazardous chemicals.
- Encourage parents to learn more about meningococcal meningitis and to talk to their physician about the appropriateness of immunization for their child.
- Educate parents, coaches and teachers to the danger of steroids and other performance enhancing drugs that develop athletic prowess in girls and boys.
- Oppose all legislation attempting to legalize marijuana, methamphetamine and other recreational drugs.
- Educate children and youth to the dangers of alcohol consumption.
- Support enforcement of laws that regulate idling of school buses.

### **Safety**

- Support legislation and promote programs that would encourage the elimination of violence in the home, school and community.
- Educate the public to the problem of child abuse and neglect and support legislation that would foster pro active prevention strategies.
- Educate parents to the signs and dangers of underage drinking and oppose laws that would weaken the 21 year old drinking age.
- Support legislation that provides for more affordable, accessible, and quality before and after school childcare programs.
- Support the enforcement of the law for youth requiring the use of helmets and knee/wrist/elbow pads for roller-blading, skateboarding, and scooters.
- Support federal legislation that regulates the sale of assault weapons.
- Monitor the enforcement of childproof handgun legislation in New Jersey.
- Support legislation that acknowledges that the right to disclose personal information of minors should remain solely with their parents.
- Support the implementation of school bus seatbelt laws and other school bus safety issues.
- Oppose legislation that would increase the weight or size of commercial vehicles on interstate highways.
- Support programs and services to aid homeless families.
- Monitor and support the enforcement of bicycle helmet safety laws.
- Support and promote legislation that would regulate the use of phthalates a chemical in plastics which has been linked to health problems in children and youth.