

**Legislative advocacy is a necessary and integral part of PTA's work. The New Jersey PTA Legislative Actions and Priorities is the authority for action by New Jersey PTA on legislation and regulations affecting the health, education, and welfare of all children and youth, based on the authority of the National and New Jersey PTA bylaws. Resolutions and legislative actions priorities are indicative of the issues on which PTA targets its efforts and activity.**

## **EDUCATION**

- Provide the most comprehensive and diversified education possible for all children and youth, one that achieves quality and excellence.
- Secure funding for public education sufficient to provide a thorough and efficient opportunity for all students.
- Ensure teacher preparation programs and support services are designed to attract qualified men and women, and retain them in the teaching profession.
- Ensure educational programs that help children and youth to better understand the need to protect and conserve natural resources.
- Support Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) Education.
- Promote global education, including foreign languages, and multicultural education.
- Promote quality counseling, guidance, health, and library services at all educational levels.
- Promote the study of New Jersey and American history as the basis of good citizenship.
- Promote affordable, accessible, quality childcare, preschool, and afterschool programs.
- Support the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.
- Support the work of State and Federal regulations and legislation on Special Education.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

- Provide for current education and prevention programs for children and youth on the subjects of drug and alcohol use, tobacco use, E-Cigarettes and Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) (i.e., vaping) related health issues and communicable diseases acquired by sharing inhalant products.
- Secure adequate treatment and rehabilitation services for children and youth suffering from substance abuse and mental health issues.
- Ensure that all children and families have adequate food, shelter, clothing and health care.
- Protect and improve the health of all children and youth through the prevention, treatment and control of diseases.
- Prevent and control or eliminate hazards to the safety and well-being of all children and youth.
- Provide for all children and youth effective education, community services, and facilities directed to family engagement and well-being.
- Provide services and facilities for the care and protection of abused dependent, abandoned, runaway and homeless children and youth.
- Educate families regarding safe food, water and drugs, as well as cosmetics and other products and medical devices.
- Provide education and prevention programs for all families and training for members and non-members on the subject of violent behavior and bullying.
- Support federal and state legislation that regulates the sale and possession of assault weapons and handguns.

## **JUVENILE JUSTICE**

- Encourage collaboration between law enforcement, the judicial system, and child welfare agencies.
- Encourage the use of Civil Citation as an alternative to youth arrest.
- Prohibit youth who are charged with a serious crime from being tried in the adult court system unless there has been an opportunity for a judicial hearing and appeal.
- Prevent the incarceration of youth in adult facilities.
- Support youth leaving the juvenile justice system with programs that prevent repeat offenses.
- Promote restorative justice in our schools by addressing victims' needs, holding offenders meaningfully accountable for their actions and engaging the community in the justice process.

## **2023 - 2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

- Support legislation and regulations to assure that every student in New Jersey will be able to attend school in a safe, healthy environment. This includes, but is not limited to legislation on school security, lead, water, mercury and asbestos testing, bus safety, distracted driving, gun violence, human trafficking, substance abuse, smokeless devices (i.e. vaping), bullying, harassment and cyber safety.
- Educate families and community members on how to utilize the annual NJ Department of Education School Performance Reports and/or information provided by local school districts to benefit the education of their students.
- Support funding and training for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) in all public schools and ensure that parents are aware of the state requirements.
- Support full funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and all other state and federal laws affecting the education of children and youth receiving special services in New Jersey and continue to encourage local communities to monitor their enforcement.
- Support initiatives that encourage students' overall health including social emotional health, healthy sleep habits, physical fitness, healthy eating, and that focus on food insecurities in the home, school, and community.
- Work with the NJ Department of Education to incorporate standards for healthy sleep habits into the existing health, science and physical education curriculum and school advisory functions to address students' sleep needs and patterns, potential risks of insufficient sleep and sleep related difficulties. Support further research on benefits of delaying school start times for high school students.
- Support legislation that secures adequate funding for public school education and school infrastructure to provide a comprehensive and diverse education for all students in the classroom and on-line when emergencies dictate.
- Collaborate with our public school administrators and families to embrace a mindset encouraging multiple pathways to post-secondary success by providing information about the range of options including, but not limited to, public or private universities, colleges, community colleges, career/technical schools, vocational/trade schools, centers for continuing education, campus transition programs, apprenticeship programs and military service.

## **2023 - 2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES cont.**

- Educate our school community to recognize disparate/negative treatment of groups including but not limited to racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+, families that are financially challenged and families of students receiving special services and to work towards solutions.
- Support the extensions of juvenile removal from adult jails and complete sight and sound separation from adult offenders for all children under the age of 18 detained in the Juvenile Justice System.
- Bridge the digital divide by ensuring that every student has a device and broadband connectivity. Educate teachers, families, and students across the state on digital literacy to ensure all stakeholders are knowledgeable.
- Support legislative initiatives aimed at addressing and diversifying the teacher pipeline to help recruit, prepare and support teacher candidates.
- Engage our schools and community around environmentally sustainable practices and the need to raise our students to be good stewards of our earth.
- Support gun safety legislation to reduce gun violence and deaths by establishing programs to educate students, parents and community members about gun safety and violence prevention in collaboration with other partnering agencies.

**Adopted by the delegates of the 2023 Leadership Convention**