

During the annual Washington State PTA (WSPTA) legislative assembly, delegates decide the public policy positions that guide state and local advocacy work for WSPTA and its associated local PTAs and councils.

Legislative assembly will take place on October 20-21, 2018. Delegates will vote on the following two legislative principles, 12 legislative issues, four resolutions and one amendment to an existing resolution. Only the parts in shaded boxes are open for amendment and debate. Legislative issues will also be ranked by delegates to determine a Top 5 for the 2019 and 2020 legislative sessions.

LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES FOR CONSIDERATION

There are two new proposed legislative principles for consideration. **Only the language in the shaded box can be amended.**

Proposed Legislative Principle #1

Category: Health and Well-Being of Children and Youth

The WSPTA shall identify and initiate education and action on public policy that protects and promotes the health and welfare of children and youth. The association shall support:

- Evidence-based policies that reduce or reverse adverse health effects of indoor or outdoor environmental conditions

Persuasive Statement

To learn, our children need healthy environments inside and outside the classroom. Aging schools contain high amounts of indoor pollutants. The Washington State Department of Health identified many sources in schools, including mold in walls, lead in water, asbestos in acoustical tiles, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, formaldehyde and radon.

Children face health challenges outside. The California Children's Health Study showed that as air pollution increased, the number of asthma cases, lung disease and days home from school increased. Children are in more danger to air pollutants due to their size, increased level of physical activity and increased respiratory rate. Children have a less developed immune system and, relative to their size and weight, breathe more air. Idling school buses emit pollutants in their exhaust. As temperatures increase, forests, grasslands and farmlands become drier and more prone to fire. Smoke, particulate matter and aeroallergens aggravate heart and respiratory conditions and make children more susceptible to lung diseases.

This legislative principle empowers PTA members to advocate for healthier schools: new schools; replaced heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems; removal of hazardous materials; or replacing or retrofitting school buses to eliminate emissions. Members can ask local jurisdictions to follow clean air standards, invest in public transportation and use

clean energy. Reducing carbon-based emissions will reduce greenhouse gases and pollutants and give our children clean air so they can enjoy outdoor sports and other activities. PTA advocates for the health and safety of children and youth. Let's add this to our list of principles!

Proposed Legislative Principle #2

Category: Health and Well-Being of Children and Youth

The WSPTA shall identify and initiate education and action on public policy that protects and promotes the health and welfare of children and youth. The association shall support:

- Reduction or elimination of all forms of violence to ensure safety of students, staff and communities

Persuasive Statement

Thousands of people experience youth violence every day, in all communities—urban, suburban, rural, and tribal. Youth violence is common: 20% of high school students reported being bullied on school property in the last year; 6% were threatened with a weapon, and 5.6% missed school in the prior month because they did not feel safe.

Youth can be a victim, a perpetrator, or a witness of violence. Exposure to youth violence and school violence can lead to a wide array of negative health behaviors and outcomes, including depression, anxiety, alcohol or drug use, and suicide.

School violence may also involve or impact adults: 9% of teachers report that they have been threatened with injury and 5% reported that they had been physically attacked by a student from their school.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) strategies for reducing youth violence include promoting family environments that support healthy development; preschool enrichment with family engagement; universal school-based programs; connecting youth to caring adults and activities through mentoring and after-school programs; creating protective community environments, including dangerous access prevention for guns; and community partnerships to address behavior and other risk factors.

Preventing and reducing all forms of violence at school directly supports student and staff health and well-being by preserving a safe learning environment, and is a core mission of PTA, just as it is essential to the mission of education itself. We need this as a long-term legislative principle.

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

There are 12 proposed issues for consideration. **Only the title and description statements can be amended.**

Proposed Issue #1

Best Practices for School Meals – Lunch

The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that:

- Modifies WAC 392-157-125 "Time for Meals" to define a minimum lunch period for students. Language should be added to specify a minimum of 20 minutes of *seated* time, with additional time to move through a line and be seated with a meal;
- Promotes recess before lunch for elementary students.

Persuasive Statement

Schools play a critical role in establishing healthy dietary behaviors in students. Proper nutrition and healthy eating habits are a cornerstone to a child's growth, development and learning.

The current regulation "Time for Meals" (WAC 392-157-125) does not specify a minimum amount of time to be designated for school lunch. Many students do not have enough time. Guidelines from the CDC, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and University of Washington indicate that scheduling recess before lunch, and at least 20 minutes of seated time to eat, increases consumption of fruits and vegetables, decreases food waste, reduces student discipline referrals, and increases student academic performance.

For too many Washington state students, meals at school are their only food for the day. Without adequate time to enjoy a complete meal, we are preventing them from reaching their full potential.

A CDC report on School Health Guidelines concludes the childhood obesity epidemic and the chronic diseases associated with poor dietary habits and physical inactivity are not likely to be reversed without a strong contribution from schools.

WSPTA, as the oldest and largest grassroots children's advocacy association in Washington state, aims to improve the quality of our children's health, welfare, safety and education. WSPTA should support a research-based healthy lunch period for all students that maximizes the benefits of lunch by scheduling recess before lunch.

Proposed Issue #2

Engaging Families in Student Success

The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that increase transformative family engagement practices by:

- Replacing “Parent Involvement Coordinator” with the more inclusive “Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Coordinator” in the funding formula;
- Adopting a clear definition for FACE Coordinators;
- Funding at least one FACE Coordinator per school, starting with high poverty schools first.

Persuasive Statement

There is strong evidence that students whose families are engaged with school have better outcomes – higher grades, increased enrollment in rigorous classes, and higher graduation and postsecondary enrollment rates – regardless of income or background. Educators also identify family engagement as one of the most challenging aspects of their work.

Family engagement is about so much more than parent-teacher conferences and homework support. Transformative family engagement is about eroding racism, classism, sexism, and xenophobia, and moving toward relationships that are rooted in trust and respect for human dignity.

Family engagement requires building the capacities of all members of schools and communities – superintendents, principals, teachers, school staff, family engagement liaisons, families, students, and community partner staff – to collaborate across lines of difference.

The legislature has provided the structure for the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Coordinator position. Now, we must help them complete its work: define the role of that position and fund one FACE Coordinator in every school.

Family engagement cannot be an afterthought of Washington State PTA’s advocacy agenda; it must be at the fore, the leading edge of our organizational philosophy, and the first answer to the question, “Why does PTA exist?” No single issue has a greater potential impact on the greatest number of children’s lives than this deceptively simple, yet exceedingly difficult element of our advocacy. To be truly relevant in the 21st century, and to fulfill the promise of our mission and vision, this issue must form the cornerstone of our platform.

Proposed Issue #3

Fund Paraeducator Training

The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that:

- Fully fund the training requirements for paraeducators mandated by law, including the 28-hour fundamental course of study and the additional 70 hours of professional development required within the first three years of employment.

Persuasive Statement

WSPTA has been advocating for creating training standards and professional development for paraeducators. In 2017, HB 1115 passed requiring that all paraeducators complete a 28-hour fundamental course of study and 70 hours of additional professional development within the first three years of employment. There is still advocacy needed to secure funding for these requirements and for paraeducators working with groups like Special Education (SPED) and English Language Learners (ELL) to get additional certification to be better equipped to work with those students.

Paraeducators are the pivotal link between students and teachers. They provide hours of instruction, frequently working with students one-on-one under the guidance of a teacher. Many paraeducators work in classrooms where there are exceptional needs like Learning Assistance Programs (LAP) and Transitional Bilingual Instructional Programs (TBIP). Often paraeducators are placed in these classrooms with no prior experience and no idea what to expect. If they aren't given the education to be prepared to work in these environments, then we are setting them up for potential failure, and that hurts children.

Another reason we need to fund paraeducator training is to provide those who want to advance their career an option of getting a teaching certificate. We have a critical teacher shortage and paraeducators' experience in the classroom could be credited as clock hours, helping to create a pipeline for future teachers.

We need to fund educating our paraeducators now. They are the ones who are working daily with the leaders of tomorrow. Let's give them the tools to succeed.

Proposed Issue #4

Increase Access to High-Quality Preschool

The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that:

- Develop a preschool expansion plan to ensure all preschool-age children in Washington state have access to high-quality preschool. The plan must address the equity gaps and improve student outcomes in the pre-K-12 public school system.

Persuasive Statement

Washington state's lack of access to affordable, high-quality preschool has created a significant opportunity gap for children entering school. The gaps impact the potential success of children in school and life and outcomes for our state education system. The current eligibility for our state preschool program is for children from families with income at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level - \$27,060. Children in families that are low-income, but do not have access to these programs or with incomes just above the program income guidelines are left out.

State legislation should ensure that all children from families where income is a barrier for enrollment are provided an opportunity attend high-quality preschool. This shift in policy for early learning access would ensure children not eligible for Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) and Head Start have access to high-quality preschool through an expansion of financial assistance for enrollment in preschool programs that meet quality standards.

This legislation could have an important impact for children and families that cannot afford tuition or do not meet the Head Start income eligibility guidelines. The Washington State PTA should support preschool expansion to address the opportunity gap that impacts children in their pre-K-12 outcomes and life.

Proposed Issue #5

Safe School Plans and Emergency Preparedness

The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that support emergency preparedness planning in schools through:

- Development of clear and specific guidelines and standards for safe school plans;
- Funding to ensure that every school has adequate means to serve all students equitably during times of crisis or natural disaster.

Persuasive Statement

With the recent rise in school violence across our nation and the ongoing threat of natural disasters, emerging infectious diseases, and terrorism, emergency preparedness becomes increasingly relevant. Washington state's legislature has even recognized that "comprehensive safe school plans...are of paramount importance," and mandates that each school implement an individual, comprehensive safe school plan, that it review and update the plan each year, and that it record and report the plan with law enforcement agencies. Despite this very clear mandate, the state provides no clear guidance regarding plan development, offers no regular

funding allocation, nor is any accountability system in place to document that plans have been completed nor is there a process for evaluation and feedback to ensure that plans are sound.

Washington state's public schools serve over 1.1 million children, many of whom spend a large part of their time in school. An emergency crisis or disaster can happen anywhere and at any time. Our schools *need* to prepare in order to protect the children in their care. And while our state has been moving in the right direction by mandating safe school plans, there is still much work to be done. Advocating for clear and specific guidelines, standards and funding mandates for safe school plans will work to ensure that every school can serve all students during times of crisis or disaster.

Proposed Issue #6

Strategies to Address the Teacher Shortage

The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that recruit and retain effective educators, develop a diverse workforce, and ensure equity and access to educator preparation through:

- Funding of recruitment and conditional scholarship programs;
- Expansion of Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB)-approved conditional certificates and alternative routes to certification;
- Phased-in expansion of Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) grants to all schools.

Persuasive Statement:

Preparing students for career, college, and life depends on an excellent, engaged teacher in every classroom. Currently, Washington state has an estimated shortage of 3500 certificated teachers, especially in STEM, special education, ELL, early education (birth – grade 3), and elementary (K-8). In school year 2016-17, 85% of principals could not find fully-certificated teachers to fill all their teacher openings, 97% of human resource directors said they are struggling or in crisis, and 74% said it is getting worse.

This shortage makes it hard to staff mandated full-day kindergarten, to reduce class sizes, and to have qualified educators teaching math, science, ELL and special education students, all of which ultimately impacts student learning.

In addition, Washington state's teacher workforce is less diverse (10% non-white) than its student population (41% non-white) and is 73% female. Diversifying the teacher workforce is one effective strategy to narrow Washington state's opportunity gap.

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) has many pilot initiatives designed to expand the pool of teachers in high demand, hard to fill positions and schools, and in remote locations

or high-poverty schools, including “Grow Your Own” programs (Recruiting Washington Teachers, Bilingual Educators Initiative), conditional scholarships, expansion of alternative routes to certification and the flexible conditional certificates for career changers who wish to enter the educator workforce.

Washington State PTA should actively advocate for the funding to expand these teacher recruitment initiatives and the evidence-based teacher retention Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) grants to all schools.

Every student deserves to be taught by a qualified and effective teacher – let’s make sure that happens.

Proposed Issue #7

Raise the Age of Tobacco and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems to 21

The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that:

- Limit access, sale, and distribution of all tobacco products and electronic nicotine delivery systems, including but not limited to, e-cigarettes, vaping and Juul devices, to age of 21 and up;
- Prohibit packaging and marketing targeted at youth.

Persuasive Statement

Current youth report easy access to tobacco and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), including e-cigarettes, other vaping and Juul devices. Manufacturers use candy flavorings and fun images to target youth. The current design of the devices makes it easy for youth to conceal their possession and use, and other drugs, including marijuana, are easily substituted for nicotine in these devices.

Washington State PTA should take action to support legislation, regulation and/or other state and local measures to raise the age of access to tobacco products and ENDS to the age of 21. Policies should also address the ingredients and manufacturing of ENDS; prohibit the targeted marketing and sale of tobacco and ENDS to youth under 21; prohibit use of ENDS in public places and school grounds; and support increased awareness of the risks associated with all forms of tobacco and vaping through prevention and awareness programs targeted to students and families, school boards, local officials and communities.

The purposes of National PTA and Washington State PTA are to “promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, places of worship, and throughout the community” and “to advocate for laws that further the education, physical and mental health, welfare, and safety of children and youth.”

Proposed Issue #8

Best Practices for School Recess

The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that:

- Define a *minimum* of 30 minutes of daily recess time for elementary school students;
- Prohibit recess from being withheld due to academic or punitive reasons;
- Promote schools as an effective and necessary partner in guiding children to meet the CDC recommendation of 60 minutes of daily moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Persuasive Statement

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says: “Recess is at the heart of a vigorous debate over the role of schools in promoting the optimal development of the whole child. A growing trend toward reallocating time in school to accentuate the more academic subjects has put this important facet of a child’s school day at risk. Recess serves as a necessary break from the rigors of concentrated, academic challenges in the classroom. But equally important is the fact that safe and well-supervised recess offers cognitive, social, emotional, and physical benefits that may not be fully appreciated when a decision is made to diminish it. Recess is unique from, and a complement to, physical education – not a substitute for it. The AAP believes that recess is a crucial and necessary component of a child’s development and, as such, it should not be withheld for punitive or academic reasons.”

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) agrees. “According to the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), recess is not viewed as a reward but as a necessary educational support component for all children. Therefore, students should not be denied recess so they can complete class work or as a means of punishment.”

WSPTA, as the largest grassroots children’s advocacy association in Washington, aims to improve the quality of children’s health, welfare, safety and education. As such, WSPTA should support legislation and policies that protect recess for all students.

Proposed Issue #9

School Construction and Simple Majority for Bonds

The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that equitably assist districts fund their capital needs for the 21st century through:

- Lower K-3 and Career and Technical Education (CTE) class sizes, capacity/growth, modernization, and safety needs;
- Updating the School Construction Assistance Program (SCAP);

- Extending the K-3 grant program;
- Documenting use of portables;
- Changing school construction bonds from super-majority (60%) to simple majority.

Persuasive Statement

It's important that students attend schools that are safe and conducive to learning, and it is our civic duty to fund school facilities. Students cannot learn effectively in standing-room only classrooms, poorly lit, or old, unsafe buildings that have mold issues or in other stages of disrepair. Districts with more portables do not have adequate bathroom and lunchroom facilities or proper recess supervision or security. These factors, and more, make school construction a health, safety and well-being problem for the children of Washington state, many from our underserved populations.

Current state funding is insufficient for districts to build, modernize or renovate school facilities to provide an appropriate learning environment that keeps all students safe. Most districts do not have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the state-mandated 17:1 classroom ratios or high school credit requirements. The state suspended a K-3 classroom grant program after one round. Adjusting the school construction assistance formula to reflect adequate student space needs and cover actual costs is an important component of funding assistance. But without local funds, districts cannot access the state's assistance program. Many recent school bond measures have secured a majority of "Yes" votes, but not the required 60 percent to pass. Simple majority for school bonds would restore the original constitutional threshold and give bonds a fighting chance to pass.

Students no longer sit in neat rows or work independently. Project-based and hands-on activities, interactive teams and flexible spaces are becoming the norm, and that requires a new collaborative mindset about the construction of 21st century schools.

Proposed Issue #10

Prevent Gun Violence by Reducing Access

The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that reduce dangerous access to firearms by:

- Prohibiting sales of semi-automatic assault rifles to < 21 and creating a 10-day waiting period;
- Raising standards for semi-automatic assault rifle purchase to that for handguns;
- Incentivizing safe storage of all firearms;

- Ensuring continued eligibility for ownership of semi-automatic assault rifles;
- Permitting and encouraging destruction of crime guns by the Washington State Patrol and other agencies.

Persuasive Statement

Too many children die by firearms in Washington state. From 1996-2017 there were nine mass shootings, including seven at schools, resulting in 19 deaths and many wounded. Firearms are involved in almost one in five youth deaths annually.

Youth suicide is a concern and is often impulsive: Twenty-four percent attempt suicide within five minutes of their decision. Access to unlocked firearms increases youth suicide risk almost ten-fold, and about 80% of youth suicides use a family member's gun. Suicides are only 20% as likely when neither guns nor ammunition is available.

Laws that incentivize safe storage and require safety training help keep guns out of the hands of children who might hurt themselves or others. Studies of dangerous access prevention laws show they “**substantially reduce** gun injuries among children and adults” and “... **reduce** all firearm self-injuries (including suicide) among young people... (and) unintentional firearm injuries and deaths among children.”

It is easier in Washington state to buy a semi-automatic assault rifle than a handgun, which requires the purchaser to be at least 21 and a background check of state and local law enforcement records. Washington state has rules about who can own a gun, but there is currently no mechanism to confirm ongoing eligibility.

Gun purchase waiting periods save lives. States with mandatory waiting periods had on average 17% fewer murders and 10% fewer suicides.

Permission to destroy crime guns was requested by the Chief of the Washington State Patrol, who was concerned about reuse of these weapons in additional crimes and equality with other law enforcement agencies.

Commonsense gun legislation works and WSPTA should support it. Even saving one life is worthwhile.

Proposed Issue #11

Social Emotional Learning

The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that:

- Integrate Social Emotional Learning and Trauma Informed Practices in the education system and pre-service and in-service educator and administrator training;

- Ensure staffing levels in schools are funded to meet student need and to support student learning and well-being;
- Increase partnerships with after-school providers and community partners.

Persuasive Statement

Far too many students in Washington state are failing to meet their potential to succeed in school and in life. Without strong social and emotional supports, students are at risk of bullying, maladjustment, trauma, depression, interpersonal violence, suicide, substance abuse, truancy, and drop out. These outcomes diminish the achievement of all students and incur great social costs. Social emotional capabilities and behavioral health are built upon effective and inclusive learning environments, strong family relationships, and community supports. Children who are exposed to adverse experiences are two times more likely to fail a grade; score lower on standardized tests; and are suspended or expelled more. In fact, the majority of Washington state school district administrators overwhelmingly identified the need to address students' behavioral-health issues as most critical. Washington state is failing to meet the needs of its students in this critical area.

Social emotional skills complement academic skills and play a vital role in helping young people build independence and the relationship skills that facilitate taking care of oneself and others, exercise the rights and privileges of living in a pluralistic and diverse democracy, and develop an integrated identity which serves as an internal framework for making choices and provides a stable base from which one can act in the world. (*Jenny Nagaoka, et al, Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework*). By bolstering the crucial role of social emotional learning and trauma informed methods in education, Washington state can help students do better in school, and lead more successful and fulfilling lives. It is time to give schools, teachers and students the tools they need to substantially improve school climate, academic achievement and contribute to the vitality of the State of Washington.

Proposed Issue #12

Strategic K-12 Investments to Close Gaps

The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that:

- Close Special Education funding gaps;
- Increase the Prototypical School Model to I-1351 levels;
- Include a categorical allocation for high mobility students;
- Expand High Poverty Local Assistance Program (LAP) by lowering the threshold;

- Allow school districts to choose between the two enrichment levy caps and increase the Local Efforts Assistance (LEA) ceiling.

Persuasive Statement

For decades fully funding K-12 education has been a WSPTA Top 5 issue and we continue to make significant progress. Today's economy is a rich mixture of professional, career and trade jobs but we need to better prepare our children and increase the graduation and ready rates. Washington state is one of the few states with growing opportunity and achievement gaps and we have the power to help close those gaps.

Superintendent Reykdal said after the McCleary decision, *"...Even with the shift from local to state funding, Washington still invests less than other states (in per capital dollars)..."*

*...it is time to look ahead. **We know where additional resources are needed:** to support students with **disabilities, close opportunity gaps, build and maintain adequate school facilities, improve pathways to graduation, and provide professional development for educators, among other items...***

*... now it is time to transform our education system into one that works for **all** students."*

Washington state needs to strategically invest in Special Education programs to meet federal requirements and to help our low-income, foster and homeless students improve their outcomes.

Our students need counselors, nurses and other staff to support their physical and emotional health.

All districts need access to additional local levy dollars (without cost to the state) to provide additional learning opportunities, professional development and enrichment programs to ensure students stay on track and graduate.

Help keep the pressure on Olympia to increase funding, vote Strategic K-12 Investments to Close Gaps as a TOP 5 issue.

RESOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

There are four new resolutions and one amendment for consideration. **Only the title and resolved clauses (in the shaded boxes) can be amended.** If a resolved clause of a resolution is amended, the resolutions committee shall edit the *whereas* clause(s) as necessary.

Proposed Resolutions #1

Improving Outcomes in Special Education

Whereas, the U.S. Supreme Court in 2017 in a unanimous opinion (hereinafter “*Andrew F.*”) ruled the legal standard for measuring progress for students with disabilities must be “markedly more. . . than *de minimis* progress from year to year;” and

Whereas, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Andrew F.* stated federal law governing special education requires that “every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives;” and

Whereas, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Andrew F.* ruled that special education programs must be “reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances;” and

Whereas, significant and persistent gaps remain between the achievement of students with disabilities and students without disabilities; and

Whereas, when compared to other states, Washington state’s rates of inclusion and high school graduation rates across categories and/or groupings of disabilities (i.e., mild to moderate to severe) rank near the bottom of the country; and

Whereas, students with disabilities in Washington state continue to experience uneven and inequitable access to enriching extracurricular activities and learning opportunities that are a necessary component of every child’s education; and

Whereas, people with disabilities have significantly lower rates of employment and educational attainment than their non-disabled peers, and, as a result, also experience higher rates of poverty; and

Whereas, there is a crucial relationship between teacher expectations of students with disabilities and higher levels of achievement; and

Whereas, upholding high expectations for all students and promoting cooperative relationships between students of all abilities can reduce the high incidence of stigmatization, and students in turn benefit by forming positive relationships and friendships and learning how to be more at ease with a variety of people; now,

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA encourage all stakeholders in the educational system – teachers (both general and special education), paraeducators, staff, families, administrators, school board directors and members of the community – to have and maintain high expectations for students with disabilities; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA collaborate with the entire school community to include children with disabilities and their families in all school-based and school-directed activities to promote cooperative relationships between students of all abilities through experiences such as peer mentoring, collaborative problem solving, and cooperative working groups, as well as through more casual or unstructured interactions; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its constituent associations support funding for ongoing pre-service training and professional development for all teachers regarding adapting instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom as well as accommodations that improve access to the general curriculum and high expectations for all students with regards to academics, extracurricular activities and overall school behavior; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington PTA and its constituent associations support implementing best practices in meeting the needs of diverse learners through such practices as inclusion, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Response to Intervention (RTI), and any other similar instructional practices to support Core Content instruction, as well as access to accommodations including assistive technology for students with disabilities, so that they may reach their highest potential.

Persuasive Statement

People with disabilities are ready. They are ready to learn, work, grow, thrive and lead productive, meaningful lives, just like people without disabilities. But in Washington state we continue to finish near the bottom of the country in basic measures of well-being for people with disabilities:

- Thirty-five percent of Washington’s 147,000 special education students drop out of high school, a rate among the highest of the 40 states studied in research conducted by the National Center for Learning Disabilities.
- No matter the type of disability, Washington state has some of the lowest rates of inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms in the nation.
- Washingtonians with disabilities experience high rates of poverty relative to people without disabilities. Poverty rates are at their highest during the working years of people with disabilities.

While funding and policies can help, what's ultimately needed is a cultural shift that embraces full inclusion, community participation and high expectations. By adopting this resolution, Washington State PTA will formally commit to the goals of improving education outcomes, preparing for access to meaningful employment, and enhancing community-based opportunities for persons with disabilities. This resolution also aligns Washington State PTA with a recent legal opinion from the U.S. Supreme Court.

These aims of this resolution can be accomplished through a variety of means, including better training for teachers and staff, improved access to core curriculum, consistent use of best practices in school and work-based learning, including mentoring and collaborative learning, and expansion of school-to-work programs such as apprenticeships.

Proposed Resolution #2

Mitigating the Health Effects of Climate Change

Whereas, a primary focus of PTA is the health and well-being of every child; and

Whereas, Washington State PTA has resolutions addressing the causes of and reducing the effects of external pollutants for asthma, health care for all children, mitigating environmental hazards, and increasing access to mental health; and legislative principles that support increased access to health care for children and youth, mental health parity, school nutrition, and effective prevention and intervention programs; and

Whereas, multiple national and international agencies have published scientific research on adverse health effects of climate change, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), and the U.S. Global Change Research Program; and

Whereas, NIH research shows that climate change increases airborne allergens and pollution; affects the ecology and temperature of a region, resulting in increased disease vectors such as mosquitoes, ticks, and flies; may be associated with staple food shortages, malnutrition, and food contamination; affects changes in coastal ecosystem health that could increase the incidence of water contamination with harmful pathogens and chemicals; and

Whereas, the NIEHS reports that, "Strategies for mitigating and adapting to climate change can prevent illness and death in people now, while also protecting the environment and health of future generations"; and

Whereas, the WHO reports that, "Today, humankind's activities are altering the world's climate. We are increasing the atmospheric concentration of energy-trapping gases, thereby amplifying the natural "greenhouse effect" that makes the Earth habitable. These greenhouse

gases (GHGs) comprise, principally, carbon dioxide (mostly from fossil fuel combustion and forest burning), plus other heat-trapping gases such as methane (from irrigated agriculture, animal husbandry and oil extraction), nitrous oxide and various human-made halocarbons"; and

Whereas, the WHO concludes that, "Unprecedentedly, today the world population is encountering unfamiliar human-induced changes in the lower and middle atmospheres and world-wide depletion of various other natural systems (e.g., soil fertility, aquifers, ocean fisheries, and biodiversity in general). Beyond the early recognition that such changes would affect economic activities, infrastructure and managed ecosystems, there is now recognition that global climate change poses risks to human population health"; and

Whereas, National PTA has had a position statement on Environmental Health, Remediation, Sustainability and Climate Change since 2003, recognizing "the scientific consensus surrounding climate change and the impact of human activities. Children represent a particularly vulnerable group already suffering disproportionately from both direct and indirect adverse health effects of anthropogenic global warming" and that "PTA members have a responsibility to promote environmental health and safety, and to help protect our world's finite natural resources"; now,

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA urges national, state and local policymakers to adopt and enforce legislation that enables people to adapt to climate change and mitigates the effects of climate change, and that uses market forces and regulations with the goal of slowing, halting and reversing climate change; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA encourages and calls for members, policy makers in government, inter-governmental bodies and non-governmental, school and community organizations to raise awareness to reduce and mitigate adverse health effects resulting from climate change; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA promotes utilization of the existing K-12 Integrated Environmental and Sustainability Education Learning Standards, including educating students on climate and energy literacy and human sustainability; and educates its members on how to calculate their carbon footprint, ways they can reduce their carbon footprint, and green, or clean, energy changes they can make in their lives; and be it further

Resolved, that the Washington State PTA and its constituent associations encourage policy makers to take action to make schools more energy-efficient, including the use of renewable, sustainable energy and technologies, and enact environmentally healthy land-use policies that take into account the geographic, economic, ethnic, cultural, and other societal factors that influence the incidence, exposure, and effects of environmental health hazards.

Persuasive Statement

There is scientific consensus that climate change poses immediate adverse health effects that especially impact children, including illnesses related to poor air quality, water-borne-, food-borne- and vector-borne diseases. Reducing local air pollution will help local children. Reducing reliance on carbon-based energy will reduce the amount of greenhouse gases and airborne pollutants, which will reduce changes to the environment that can cause adverse health effects.

Our schools should take the lead in educating our students on critical issues involving the environment by teaching the K-12 Integrated Environmental and Sustainability Education Learning Standards that have existed since 2009. School buildings should model responsible and safe practices by becoming more energy efficient whenever possible, and enacting land-use and pest-control strategies that mitigate hazard exposure.

Safeguarding the health and welfare of our children is a fundamental tenet of Washington State PTA. National PTA urges its members at all levels to “monitor, support, and advocate for laws, regulations, and programs that reduce man-made contributions to climate change and mitigate their impact on children’s health.” Action at all levels of government will inspire action in governments across the country. Adopt this resolution and let’s make Washington state and Washington State PTA leaders in the fight to mitigate the health effects of our changing climate.

Proposed Resolution #3

Equitable Access to Highly Capable Services

Whereas, Washington State PTA is a strong advocate for the social and emotional well-being and academic needs of all children, so that they may reach their highest potential; and

Whereas, highly capable students often have unique needs and vulnerabilities, including social and emotional challenges, delayed executive function, asynchronous intellectual, social, and motor development, different developmental timelines, and a need for accelerated academics; and

Whereas, successful student outcomes (positive self-image as well as academic achievement) are more likely when student needs have been met, and suffer when they have not been met; and

Whereas, students of color, English-language learners, low-income students, and students with disabilities are 250% less likely to be identified and served in highly capable programs; and

Whereas, pre-service teacher training programs rarely cover the characteristics and needs of highly capable students; now,

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA supports removing barriers to the identification of highly capable students of all genders in every demographic group, including students of color, English-language learners, low-income students, students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care, migrant students, and students with disabilities; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA supports access to highly capable services for ALL students who qualify for highly capable programming, and expressly objects to limiting access to highly capable programming based on space constraints, logistical considerations, lack of transportation, waitlists, holding appeals to a higher standard than general identification criteria, or any form of quotas; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA supports using best practices to remove barriers to the identification of ALL students who would benefit from highly capable services, including the use of universal screening in early elementary grades, and again before secondary school, conducting all screenings and assessments during the regular school day, and other best practices known to improve equity of access; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA supports teachers, counselors, principals, and administrators receiving meaningful pre-service training and ongoing professional development about the unique characteristics and social, emotional, and academic needs of highly capable students.

Persuasive Statement

There is a disproportionate underrepresentation of low-income students, students with learning disabilities, English language learners, and students of color in Highly Capable (HiCap) programs statewide. This is because most districts use outdated identification practices that favor parents who can successfully navigate the complex HiCap identification process.

Better identification practices exist, such as universal screening for all first and fifth graders, and doing all assessments during the school day.

Although high intelligence is the prototypical trait of HiCap students, with high intelligence come traits such as delayed social, emotional, and motor development, often with delayed executive function. When these areas go unsupported, these students miss developmental milestones that have cumulative negative academic, social, and emotional outcomes through adolescence and into adulthood.

HiCap students are also at significant risk of not developing perseverance or a growth mindset if school is always “easy” for them. Behavior problems, emotional problems including depression, and underachievement are rampant. Talented students are getting lost in the system, and that is a loss not only for those students and their families but also for our communities and for the increasingly high-tech economy in Washington state.

HiCap programs are a “whole child” intervention for unique students who would likely not be successful without the academic and social/emotional supports they require. These needs extend beyond the scope of a conventional learning environment. Hence, we have a moral duty to proactively seek out EVERY child who needs that intervention and make sure that EVERY student gets it.

Proposed Resolution #4

Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention and Victim Supports

Whereas, Washington State PTA is a strong advocate for the well-being and education of all children; and

Whereas, national surveys of adults suggest that between 9-32% of women and 5-10% of men report that they were victims of sexual abuse and/or assault during their childhood. Eighty percent of Washington state women’s sexual assault experiences occurred prior to the age of 18; and

Whereas, underserved populations such as LGBTQ, Native Americans, and the developmentally disabled experience sexual assault rates up to at least twice that of the general population; and

Whereas, twenty percent or more of college-age students report being victims of sexual harassment and sexual violence; and

Whereas, research further indicates that educational institutions are the most common location of peer sexual victimization; and

Whereas, sexual violence or sexual harassment have devastating effects on students by negatively impacting their emotional and physical well-being, and can become a barrier to equal and free access to public education; and

Whereas, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1681 et seq., prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex (including sexual harassment or sexual violence) in any federally-funded education program or activity without, however, requiring prevention strategies or support services for victims; now

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its constituent associations urge and support the strengthening of Title IX and other federal, state and local laws that identify, address the effects of, and prohibit sexual harassment and sexual violence impacting students; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its constituent associations collaborate with school administrations, institutions of higher learning, and community partners to ensure that every school:

- Provides support services for victims of sexual harassment and sexual violence; and
- Presents awareness and prevention programs that address sexual harassment and sexual violence affecting students; and
- Includes training on the responsibilities of educational institutions, as well as the rights of sexual violence and sexual harassment victims under Title IX and other laws and regulations.

Persuasive Statement

Washington state's children WILL experience sexual violence in their lifetime, whether directly as a victim, or indirectly as a community member bearing the burden of a culture that remains passive, as pop culture, media, commerce, labor, laws, and policies continue to tell our communities that the objectification of women and vulnerable populations is OK. As the largest children's advocacy organization in the state, we need to prioritize all aspects of positive societal change in this area. Perceived thinking (rooted in actual evidence) that their voices won't be heard and direct action won't be taken, makes victims' vast under-reporting the norm. Accurate data is unavailable because of the lack of effective victim support and follow-through. In Washington state, current culture and laws place the burden of proof on the victim, actually shaming the victim. There is a real lack of justice for sexual violence victims.

Proposed Amendment of Current Resolution #5

11.19 School Nutrition

Resolution passed 2007

Whereas, nutrition has traditionally been a major concern of Washington State PTA; and

Whereas, all Washington State school districts were mandated by August 2005 to develop nutrition policies with regard to food served outside the federal breakfast and lunch programs; and

Whereas, these nutrition policies are not standardized, but vary significantly from district to district. Also, districts are in various phases of implementation; and

Whereas, even though meals served under the federal breakfast and lunch programs are already highly regulated, there is still room for improvement in the quality of the food served in these programs; now

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Washington State PTA encourage its local PTAs and councils to be engaged in the ongoing policy-making processes at all levels with regard to school nutrition; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA encourage its local PTAs and councils to continue to monitor the quality of meals served and other food available in schools (such as vending machines, student stores, student fund-raising projects, and classroom snacks) in order to ensure the best nutrition for our state’s young people to develop good habits that will contribute to a lifetime of good nutrition; and be it further

Resolved, That Washington State PTA urge its local PTAs and councils to encourage nutritional and palatable school meals by actively encouraging involvement of parents, teachers and students with food service personnel in the decision-making process of meal planning; to support nutrient-saving methods of purchasing and preparation of foods; to provide more products with whole grains; to reduce the excessive use of sweeteners and starches; to reduce the use of foods high in fat and salt; to eliminate known unhealthy or harmful methods of preservation and additives in foods served or available.

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its constituent organizations support the increased equitable access to school meals such as breakfast after the bell; support expansion of meal programs using the resources already in place across the state to ensure all students get adequate nutrition throughout the calendar year; support the national standard of twenty minutes of seated time to eat lunch, not including the time spent transitioning into a lunch room or waiting in line for food, as well as scheduling recess before lunch when possible; and oppose the practice of meal debt policies that shame or humiliate students, or prevent children from receiving a full meal due to meal debt.

Persuasive Statement

Across Washington state we have a problem of inequitable nutritional supports for all children K-12 and in higher education. While there are many resources, we are still missing a large majority of students. Studies show our most vulnerable populations of children are still not getting enough nutritional supports. They are unable to learn or be successful students, which widens the equity gap for these children who are already at a deficit. In many cases breakfast after the bell and free and reduced lunches are the only meals they receive all day. The WSPTA already has a principle and practice of identifying and initiating education and action on public policy that protects and promotes the health and welfare of children and youth.

By advocating for raising eligibility standards for existing programs and increasing funding to expand more supplemental nutritional programs, as our state population grows we will reach more of the populace in need.