

Position Statements

ADEQUATE PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING (1992) The Florida PTA urges the legislature to reverse its recent trend and adequately fund public education. Adequate public education funding:

- must position Florida's per pupil expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary schools at a minimum of 105% of the national average;
- must guarantee full funding of the Statutory District Cost Differential (DCD);
- must provide equity for local tax efforts in districts;
- must fully fund all state mandates, e.g., transportation and ESOL training;
- must preclude using Florida's Education Enhancement Trust Fund (lottery dollars) for basic public education funding; and
- must meet the needs created by growth, inflation and shifting operational burdens.

ADVERTISING - ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE PUBLIC (1987) Local PTAs and county councils should exert pressure on advertisers and the media to limit advertising which promotes violence and exploits the sexuality of young men and women to sell products, especially the advertising directed toward youth.

ADVERTISING (1988) The Florida PTA recommends that the Department of Education add components that will motivate critical analysis of advertising in classes such as, but not limited to, social studies, psychology and life management.

ARTS IN EDUCATION ESSENTIAL CURRICULA (2004) Florida PTA recommends every school district place greater emphasis on arts education and increase opportunities for student participation in the arts incorporating the Florida Sunshine Standard approved by the State Board of Education, and be it further

Florida PTA urges that unless a teacher has specialized skills in the arts or is a recognized professional in their arts specialty, the arts be taught by teachers certified in their specific arts subject area and be aligned with the National Standards (No Child Left Behind) and the Sunshine State Standards, and be it further

The Florida PTA urges the State Legislature to include and fully fund Arts instruction without cutting funding from existing programs as part of the PreK - 12 curriculum at all schools.

ASSESSMENT AND TESTING (2006) National PTA believes that valid assessment does not consist of only a single test score, and that at no time should a single test be considered the student's academic or work future.

AVERAGE CHILDREN (1980) Although it is necessary to provide programs for exceptional children of every kind, the school system must be ever mindful that they have an equal responsibility to provide a quality program that will enable the large middle group labeled "average child" to achieve their maximum potential in academic and personal development.

BLUEPRINT 2000 (1995) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to continue to support the initiatives of Blueprint 2000 as the vehicle to encourage innovative school improvement and accountability.

The Florida Legislature should reject competing proposals which might be called charter schools, vouchers, scholarships or other names that divert attention, energy and funds from implementation of Blueprint 2000.

CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDING (1991) The Florida PTA encourages the Legislature to develop a comprehensive long range plan for funding the capital outlay needs of education. (1985) The Florida PTA believes that the needs of public school districts should be the first priority of PECO funding.

CASINO GAMBLING (1981) Florida PTA believes that the intrusion of casino gambling into the community would not benefit children and youth. Claims of the monetary benefits to education to be derived from proceeds of casino gambling are not factually substantiated. Florida PTA opposed the legalization of casino gambling in Florida at their 1978 convention and continues to do so.

CHARTER SCHOOLS (1996) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to ensure that any legislative proposals regarding publicly funded Charter Schools include the following specific criteria:

- Charter schools must not be operated for profit nor be affiliated with private, religious or home schools.
- Charter schools must be open to all students regardless of race, sex, religion, physical, mental, emotional or learning exceptionalities.
- Charter schools must provide transportation as required by Chapter 234 Florida Statutes.
- Charter schools must be subject to all state and federal health, safety and antidiscrimination laws and be subject to the Florida Public Records Act (Chapter 119, FS).
- Charter schools must fall under the authority of and be accountable to the local school board
- Charter school teachers must be state certified.
- Charter school plans must provide for the maximum involvement of parents/guardians and provide clear information to all parents/guardians through public hearings.
- Charter schools must not deplete funding from existing public schools.
- Charter schools must continue the educational philosophies of School Improvement under Blueprint 2000.

CHILD CARE (1991) The Florida PTA encourages its local units and county councils to raise parental awareness to selecting only those family and child care centers which comply with state and local requirements and regulations.

CHILD LABOR LAW (1986) The Florida PTA supports the Legislature's changes in the Child Labor Law, Chapter 86.13, effective July 1, 1986, extending the working hours restrictions which currently apply to 14 to 15 year olds to all students 17 or under

enrolled in the K-12 Program and limiting the number of hours worked per week to 30. These restrictions do not apply to any student during holidays and vacations, nor to students who are no longer enrolled in the K-12 Program.

CHILD PROTECTION (1996) The Florida PTA urges the legislature to maintain, improve and fully fund the current system that gives first priority to the protection and well-being of children.

CHILD TRAFFICKING (2008) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to support the adoption and enforcement of laws that will deter the importation and illegal detainment of children.

CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PREVENTION (1993) The Florida PTA shall support legislation aimed at primary prevention of childhood lead poisoning through mandatory medical screening and follow-up for all children six years old and under, environmental assessment and abatement, licensure and training of abatement professionals and public education.

CHILDRENS MENTAL HEALTH (1992) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to fully fund a statewide comprehensive system of children's substance abuse and mental health services that must include:

- a. prevention programs which serve children in preschool programs and earlier;
- b. in-school student assistance programs to provide short-term intervention;
- c. access to individual, family and group counseling in convenient settings and times;
- d. intensive home-based services which address the needs of families in their natural environment; and
- e. residential treatment, including crisis stabilization, inpatient facilities, therapeutic group and foster homes and post-treatment services.

CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO LEGAL COUNSEL (2007) The Florida PTA urges that the legislature require qualified legal counsel for all children in all proceedings governed by Chapter 39, Florida Statutes*, and

The Florida PTA supports the expansion of the Florida Guardian ad Litem Program to ensure that every child in dependency court has a Guardian ad Litem (GAL).

*Judicial proceedings that deal with the care, safety and protection of children.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES DISTRICTS (1991) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to exclude Children's Services Districts from the definition of public body as defined in the Community Redevelopment Act.

CLASS SIZE REDUCTION (1994) The Florida PTA urges the legislature to phase in maximum class size standards lower than those mandated by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) by the year 1999 and to establish class size standards for Exceptional Student Education classes; and

The Florida PTA urges the legislature to fully fund the capital, personnel and operational cost necessary to decrease or maintain class sizes under these levels.

National PTA supports class size reduction proposals that consider actual class size,

meaning the number of students in a teacher's room for whom that teacher is accountable, rather than pupil/teacher ratios, which do not accurately reflect teachers' contacts with children. National PTA recognizes that class size reduction efforts will require a significant financial commitment for recruiting, hiring, and training qualified teachers, and increased school facilities. However, this investment will be offset in the long term by the money saved when the economic and social costs associated with grade retention and dropping out of school are reduced.

National PTA supports parents, school administrators and faculty, community members, and government officials working together to assure that research-based, successful education practices to reduce class size are replicated in their communities until all public schools in the country are effective schools.

CLINIC ATTENDANTS (1991) The Florida PTA supports the full funding through public funds of a paid, trained clinic attendant or health aide in each public elementary school during student hours.

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLANS (1991) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to include public schools in the infrastructure, as it is designated in the concurrency section of FS163 dealing with Comprehensive Land Use Plans.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT (1992) The Florida PTA strongly urges the legislature to prohibit the use of corporal punishment in schools.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT — ALTERNATIVE DISCIPLINARY MEASURES (1987) The Florida PTA encourages school districts to develop and implement positive alternative disciplinary measures in lieu of corporal punishment.

COVERAGE FOR THERAPEUTIC AND HABILITATIVE TREATMENTS FOR CHILDREN (2000) The Florida PTA urges the Florida Legislature to support legislation mandating health insurance coverage of therapies for all children in need of Speech, Occupational, Physical and other Habilitative Treatments; and therefore be it further resolved that the Florida PTA submit a resolution in favor of insurance coverage for Habilitative Treatments for children, to the National PTA.

CURRICULUM — COMPREHENSIVE (1982) The Florida PTA believes that quality education should include a basic comprehensive curriculum which would include, but not be limited to: (1) Basic Skills-language arts, writing, mathematics, arts, music, health, physical education, science and social studies; and (2) Life Skills-problem solving, decision-making, understanding of self and others and communication.

CURRICULUM — GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (1986) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to require one year of lead time to phase in, beginning at the 9th grade level, any changes in course requirements and/or graduation requirements. Changes in post-secondary education entrance requirements should not affect students already enrolled in high school at the time that changes are made.

DAILY RECESS (2004) The Florida PTA urges the school districts to require daily recess (defined as supervised, active, unstructured play) with adequate equipment and adequate supervision of at least 20 consecutive minutes for all elementary children.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS (1988) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to require the Department of Transportation to receive approval for projects which have an impact on a school or school crossing from the school board and the county or municipality.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (1997) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to adequately fund services that reduce domestic violence and its impact on the lives of children.

DOOR TO DOOR SALES (1990) The Florida PTA urges school districts to adopt policies which would prohibit door to door sales and/or solicitations by kindergarten through eighth grade children, unless accompanied by a responsible adult.

DROPOUT PREVENTION FUNDING (1989) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to fully fund Dropout Prevention Programs. If a district exceeds its established caps on this program, these FTEs should revert to the appropriate basic cost factor.

DRUG FREE SCHOOLS ZONES (1991) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to amend Florida Law Chapter 90-111, Section 893.13 (Drug Free Zones) to include school district offices and ancillary facilities as well as child care centers and public libraries.

DRUGS — SUBSTANCE ABUSE AWARENESS (1987) The Florida PTA encourages PTAs at all levels to participate in or to plan appropriate activities that will develop among citizens a maximum awareness of substance abuse thus insuring the health and well-being of future generations.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: Readiness to Start School (1998) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to ensure that early child care and education programs are safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate by establishing licensing requirements based on statewide standards that reflect current research. These programs should be affordable, available, and accessible with assistance for parents with inadequate income.

The Florida PTA opposes using a standardized testing tool as the basis for major decisions regarding early childhood placement or progress, or to deny entry to public education.

The Florida PTA urges its PTA and county councils to work within their communities to make available to parents the materials, resources, and education needed to foster optimal early childhood development.

EDUCATION FOR GIFTED AND TELENED CHILDREN (2007) The National PTA endorses and supports educational programs in the public schools for those children identified as gifted or talented.

The National PTA will prepare materials that parents might use in local school districts to encourage schools to pursue identification of gifted and talented children and to realize their responsibilities to provide educational programs for these particular youngsters.

EDUCATION FUNDING AWARENESS (1996) The Florida PTA directs its board

of directors to provide information and training to its PTAs and county councils on the history, current status and processes surrounding education funding.

The Florida PTA urges its PTAs and county to work within their communities to facilitate understanding of education funding issues at the state and local levels.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDIES (1989) The Florida PTA shall urge and support the passing of legislation requiring that environmental impact studies be completed prior to the construction of new schools and that new school construction should be a distance of no less than four hundred feet from the right of way of high voltage power lines.

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR (1999) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to adequately fund districts that submit a plan to extend the minimum public school year. The Florida PTA encourage our members to participate in school level and district level planning, if an extension of the school year is being considered.

EXTREMIST GROUPS (1983) Local PTAs and county councils should become informed of the tactics used by extremist groups, either to the right or to the left, and be prepared to assure that all PTA decisions are constructive, based on facts, and are by a majority vote.

We will consider the impact of any legislation on the family and support laws that encourage the rights and responsibilities of parents and children.

FAMILY UNIT (1980) The Florida PTA wishes to reaffirm its position that the home is the basic unit in the structure of our society and should be the most constructive influence in building character, a sense of values and a concept of the world for all children and youth. To reinforce this belief, we pledge our efforts to identify, understand and help family units as they exist in today's world. We will work to provide parent education and support activities that involve family participation. We will encourage schools to include components in the curriculum that prepare youth for their role as a worthy member of the family unit. We will work in cooperation with community agencies to provide help for families in trouble. We will consider the impact of any legislation on the family and support laws that encourage the rights and responsibilities of parents and children.

FIREARMS (1995) The Florida PTA shall seek and support state and national legislation that would accomplish those goals espoused in the National PTA legislative directive regarding firearms: "National PTA supports federal firearm restrictions that protect children, schools and communities by maintaining a waiting period and background check, requiring safety education before the purchasing of a firearm, and outlaw certain military-style, semiautomatic assault weapons and non-sporting ammunition."

FLORIDA TAX STRUCTURE (1997) The Florida PTA urges the legislature to increase tax revenue through tax structure reform and order to adequately fund services necessary to meet the educational, health, safety, recreational and other basic needs of Florida's children.

The Florida PTA urges immediate reform of Florida's system of sales and use taxes. Exemptions for products and services should be retained only where they meet an overriding public policy interest.

The Florida PTA supports amendments to the Florida Constitution that enhance the ability to the state to fully fund service to meet the needs of Florida's children.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM (1999) The Florida PTA urges the state Legislature to include and fully fund foreign language instruction as part of the curriculum within the school day, beginning in kindergarten appropriately sequenced through elementary, middle (junior) and high school in the public school system in Florida.

FULL SERVICE SCHOOLS (1991) The Florida PTA supports full service schools.

FUNDING (1989) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to place priority on the basic education programs and ensure that the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) be adequately funded to guarantee an equal educational opportunity for all children. Funding formulas must assure equalization of funding for all school districts.

FUNDING CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS (1991) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to take whatever action is necessary to fully fund strategies and programs that ensure the health, safety and education of the children of Florida.

GREEN SCHOOLS Florida PTA recommends the adoption of incentive mechanisms encouraging school districts to utilize Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) established guidelines in building and renovating schools.

Florida PTA encourages schools to adopt and employ green schools best practices.

GUIDANCE PERSONNEL (Counselors and Occupational Specialists) (1980) Recognizing the importance of early detection and treatment of small problems before they become major, and realizing that any learning problem, including an emotional one, is a deterrent to a child's educational progress, the Florida PTA strongly supports the continued expansion of the elementary guidance program in Florida schools.

The Florida PTA supports the full implementation of a guidance and occupational specialist program utilized to provide prompt, academic, and personal counseling to students in all secondary Florida schools.

HABITUAL JUVENILE FELONY OFFENDERS (1988) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to create a statutory category of a program for habitual juvenile felony offenders in order to provide safety and insure a stable learning environment for all students enrolled in school.

HARASSMENT FREE ZONES (2001) The Florida PTA urges its local units and county councils to work with school and district administrators to ensure that Florida's schools become Harassment Free Zones where all students are safe from harassment, bullying and/or physical, verbal, or emotional abuse for any reason, including, but not limited to, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, physical/emotional/mental impairment, eating disorder, sexual orientation, disfigurement, or other distinguishing characteristic.

HAZARDOUS WALKING CONDITIONS (2000) We must work to eliminate hazardous conditions that threaten the health or safety of pupils who walk or are transported to their schools, including every reasonable safeguard for the students waiting, boarding and leaving school buses.

HEALTH — CHILDREN WITH ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS) (1986) The Florida PTA encourages PTAs at all levels to work with health professionals, educators, parents and lawmakers to assure that children with AIDS shall not be denied equal access to a public education with alternative programs being provided as needed.

HEALTH EXAMINATION FOR ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES (1993) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to amend Florida Statute 232 to include a comprehensive health examination by a licensed physician as part of the requirement for all students participating in secondary school-sponsored extracurricular athletic activities.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, COLLEGE PREPARATION AND ACCESS (2007) The National PTA supports legislation and programs intended to increase post-secondary participation through assisting students secondary school completion and post-secondary enrollment by providing academic (which includes fine arts) services, parent and student counseling services, and college preparatory services, particularly those programs that will assist students with different learning styles, low-income students, and disadvantaged youth.

The National PTA supports legislation and programs that foster an economically, culturally and ethnically diverse student population by increasing federal grants to students and other forms of financial aid, simplifying the application process for applying for all forms of aid, improving and increasing access to information on financial assistance for post-secondary education, and expanding access to in-state tuition levels.

IMMIGRANT EDUCATION FUNDING (1993) The Florida PTA urges the Congress of the United States to provide adequate and stable funding to local school districts for the additional costs of providing classroom space, special education programs and social services for immigrant and refugee children enrolling in public school districts throughout the country.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY (1993) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to require proactive evaluation of school buildings for indoor air quality and to adopt measures to improve air quality, including raising the minimum ventilation rate to 15 cubic feet per minute (cfm) of outside air per occupant.

PTA local units are urged to educate communities about the causes of Indoor Air Quality problems and about action that must be taken or avoided to prevent a recurrence of the problems.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS — SELECTION AND REVIEW (1983) The Florida PTA urges its local PTAs and county councils to request school boards to review or establish written instructional and media center selection and evaluation policies, including a procedure for handling challenged materials. Materials should not be proscribed, censored or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (1993) The Florida PTA supports legislation which eliminates environmental hazards caused by pesticide use, and requires that Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs, be implemented by schools and day-care centers, using the safest alternatives for pest control.

The Florida PTA supports legislation that requires that parents//guardians, teachers and school personnel be notified, in writing, prior to the application of pesticides, of the kind, frequency and health effects of the pesticides being used at their children s schools and day-care centers.

INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN (1995) The Florida PTA urges its associations to educate their members and their communities and to communicate to their respective legislators through letter writing, faxes, personal visits and phone calls regarding the harmful impact on Florida s children of fiscal decisions made by Florida s citizens and legislature during the 1990s.

KIDS VOTING (1999) The Florida PTA encourages all local units and councils to promote and actively participate in a program such as Kids Voting.

LOTTERY ACCOUNTABILITY (1995) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to require the Department of the Lottery to regularly disclose through the media, the total revenues of the lottery, prize disbursements and other department expenses, as well as the amount allocated to each school district.

NEWBORN CONGENITAL HEART SCREENING (2008) State of Florida should require that every baby born in a hospital in the state shall receive, prior to being discharged from the hospital, a pulse oximetry test for screening of Congenital Heart Defect with parental option to decline testing.

LOTTERY ACCOUNTABILITY (1996) Lottery funds that supplanted general revenue funds for education must be returned solely for enhancement purposes and t h e resulting shortfall should be replaced from other general revenue sources.

NONPARTISAN SCHOOL BOARDS (1993) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to place on the ballot a constitutional amendment requiring elected nonpartisan school boards.

ON-SITE POLLUTION (1988) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to prohibit the construction of facilities frequented by the public, such as schools, amusement parks, shopping centers, office buildings or public housing, on or adjacent to any temporary, sanitary landfill or dumpsite or former dumpsite or any other site that was used for disposal, storage, handling or generation, which exceeds state air, water or groundwater standards, or which contains any amount of carcinogenic substances. Further, full disclosure of the condition of the property shall be recorded with the deed once discovered.

PARENTAL CHOICE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS (1993) The Florida PTA urges the legislature to provide state funds only to publicly operated and tax supported schools thus preserving the concept of public education. Any proposal for parental choice must:

1. Provide funding for transportation;

2. Be based on equal access and equal educational opportunities for all students;
3. Provide clear information to all parents; and
4. Provide increased opportunity for parental involvement in the education of their children.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT (1993) The Florida PTA urges its councils and local units to actively participate in the creation and implementation of district parent involvement policies which reflect the needs, desires and aspirations of families within the communities served by each school district.

PICKUP TRUCKS (1996) The Florida PTA urges enactment of legislation prohibiting children from riding in the cargo bed of pickup trucks. The Florida PTA supports implementation of community awareness programs addressing the potential danger to people, especially children, riding in the cargo area of pickup trucks.

PLANT SURVEY AND SCHOOL BUILDING PROCESS (1989) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to provide funding for Department of Education Plant Survey to be conducted every three years in rapidly growing districts, and to amend the process for determining the need for new schools, allowing school districts to plan construction of schools based on a more reasonable percentage of projected population.

PREVENTION (2001) The Florida PTA urges the legislature to fully fund an array of coordinated and integrated prevention services to help build strong families that raise their children to be healthy, productive adults.

PUBLIC EDUCATION CAPITAL OUTLAY (PECO) (1995) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to increase the rate and expand the application of the Gross Receipts Utilities Tax, and also identify additional revenue sources to adequately and equitably fund the capital outlay needs of Florida's public schools to be applied and designated for the sole purpose of providing additional revenue and not as a replacement for existing revenues.

REGISTERED NURSES FOR SCHOOLS (2001) The Florida PTA encourage and support complete funding to supply a registered professional nurse to every 1,500 Florida public school students, a trained school health aide in every Florida public school, and to include future allocation formulas to increase nursing staff to keep pace with student enrollment.

RELATIVE CAREGIVERS (2002) Florida PTA supports the Legislation that provides relative caregivers access to medical, emotional, legal and financial services needed for the child/children in their care.

Florida PTA will address the issues of relative caregivers through cooperation and collaboration with agencies and other organizations, disseminating information, educating its members, and encouraging county councils and local units to create relative care giver committees.

RESPONSIBLE SEXUALITY EDUCATION (2001) The Florida PTA urges the legislature and local school districts to require public school sexuality curricula that recognize the special place that sexuality has in our lives; are medically accurate and age appropriate; stress the value and benefits of remaining abstinent until involved in a committed, enduring

and mutually monogamous relationship, assure awareness of optimal protection from sexually transmitted diseases and stress that there are no infallible methods of protection, except abstinence, and that condoms cannot protect against some forms of STDs.

Florida PTA urges the legislature and local school districts to require responsible sexuality education be part of normal school curricula, but families must retain the option to decline participation for their children.

RETINOBLASTOMA (2002) Florida PTA urges the State of Florida to require that every baby born in a hospital in the state shall receive, prior to being discharged from the hospital, an eye examination using an ophthalmoscope and dilation of the pupils for detection of pediatric congenital and ocular abnormalities with parental option to decline testing.

Florida PTA supports the inclusion of eye examinations using an ophthalmoscope and dilation of pupils for detection of pediatric congenital and ocular abnormalities and developmental abnormalities during periodic health care visits.

SCHOOL BUS CAPACITY (1992) The Florida PTA urges school districts to establish lower maximum student capacities of two students per seat for school buses transporting middle and high school students.

SCHOOL ENHANCEMENT (1994) The Florida PTA believes that local PTAs are service oriented organizations whose first and foremost goal is to be advocates for children. Fund-raising activities should be secondary and their proceeds should be used to enhance their school's educational environment rather than to purchase basic materials and services which should fall under state and local funding.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT/ACCOUNTABILITY (1991) Florida PTA supports the efforts of the Legislature in creating a systematic approach to school improvement and education accountability, that actively seeks the input and support of parents, students and the community.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADES (1999) The Florida PTA urges that the Governor, the Commissioner of Education, the State Board of Education and the Legislature ensure criteria for grading public schools establishing a fair and accurate method of assessing student achievement and school performance which qualifies reliance on test score data and includes other mitigating factors such as mobility, poverty, immigration, first language and suggestions made at the Department of Education public hearings, legislative committee meetings and other public venues should be considered when designing and implementing the school grading system.

SCHOOL TRAFFIC DEFINITION AND MARKING OF SCHOOL ZONES (1991) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to set a clear and standard definition for all school zones. Signs should be posted to indicate a reduction in speed to 15 m.p.h. in such locations to give motorists adequate time to slow down.

SCHOOL TRAFFIC ZONES (1991) The Florida PTA urges its local PTAs and councils to work with local law enforcement agencies to ensure strict adherence to school area traffic laws.

SEAT BELT USAGE (1991) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to require primary enforcement of seat belt usage. Currently, Florida Statute 316.614 requires only secondary enforcement of seat belt usage.

SEAT BELTS AND 28" SEAT BACKS IN NEW SCHOOL BUSES (1997) The Florida PTA supports legislation requiring any new bus purchased for the purpose of transporting school children in the state of Florida be equipped with padded 28-inch seat backs and seat belts.

SERVICE LEARNING (2008) Supports the funding of grants for service learning in K-12 as well as rules or legislation that allow students in appropriate grade levels to include service learning activity hours towards meeting community service requirements for graduation and for participation in the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

SEVEN PERIOD DAY FUNDING (1990) The Florida PTA urges the legislature to provide full funding for the seventh period in secondary school in those districts that choose to use the seven period day.

SOCIAL AND WELFARE SERVICES FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN (1998) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to mandate that funding for social service agencies be contingent upon the agency's acquiring independent national accreditation in so far as it is available.

STUDENT TRANSFER AND WITHDRAWAL (1994) The Florida PTA urges the Florida Legislature to carefully review Florida's School Law Chapter 232.021 to provide closer scrutiny of student transfer from school to school, both public and private (including home-school) for the purpose of tracking children educationally and for their private safety. The Florida Legislature should fully fund any additional operational or procedural costs resulting from legislation initiating this review.

SUBDIVISION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS (1998) The Florida PTA urges the legislature to reject any measures that propose dividing the existing 67 school districts into smaller districts.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER (1987) Substitute teachers should have at least two years of college.

SUICIDE — TEENAGERS (1984) The Florida PTA urges county councils and local units to create an awareness of the epidemic of teenage suicide, the symptoms and causes, by providing programs to educate parents, teachers and students.

SUN SAFETY EARLY DETECTION (2000) The Florida PTA strongly recommends that sun safety, skin cancer prevention and early detection awareness education be mandated throughout the State of Florida as part of education by incorporating it into pre-existing course structure in grades Pre-K-12.

SUPPORT FOR FLORIDA PUBLIC SCHOOLS COALITION FOR ADEQUACY AND FAIRNESS OF SCHOOL FUNDING (1992) The Florida PTA endorses in concept the move for legal action to ensure a student's fundamental right for an education under the Florida Constitution, and to guarantee funding be provided to meet this goal.

SUSPENSIONS — IN-SCHOOL (1980) The Florida PTA is concerned that every child have a successful school experience. Recognizing that disorderly students should not be kept in regular classrooms to the detriment of other students, we nevertheless feel that suspension from school adds to the problem of the student, the school and the community.

Therefore we support the philosophy of “in-school suspension programs “academically designed to meet the needs of the students who are disorderly.

In-school suspension programs shall provide a temporary intervention program for students who experience difficulty in the normal classroom environment because of behavioral problems.

Suspension of a student may be justified when the student’s presence endangers others or school property or would seriously disrupt the orderly academic process.

TALENTED STUDENTS — FINE ARTS (1988) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to include students talented in fine arts, to be defined by State Board Rule, within the definition of exceptional students and to establish a separate cost factor in the FEFP for talented students.

TASER GUNS/STUN DEVICES (2005) The Florida PTA urges the Florida Legislature to authorize an independent study on the effects of Taser guns/stun devices on the human body, especially children, persons with disabilities and other vulnerabilities, provide a mechanism for training of officers based on research, and to set clearly defined guidelines on the use of Taser guns/stun devices as means of necessary force and that the use of Taser guns/stun devices be permissible only in instances where lethal force would otherwise be necessary.

TAX LIMITATION (1984) The Florida PTA opposes any tax limitation by constitutional amendment which would limit the progress being made in attaining the state’s goal for education and for programs that promote the welfare of children and youth.

TAX ON SERVICES (1988) The Florida PTA supports a tax on services, with revisions, and a full replacement of funding reduced by revision to establish a more equitable tax base to provide funds for education.

TAXES — COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE RESTRUCTURING (1991) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to implement a comprehensive restructuring of Florida’s tax system with the goals of guaranteeing stable and adequate funding of public schools and necessary services for children.

TEACHER CAREER ADVANCEMENTS (1989) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to provide adequate funding to bring Florida’s teachers’ salaries up to the national average and encourage experienced teachers to stay in the classroom by fully funding a system to provide career teachers with periodic advancement and salary increases without supplanting current funding to dollars.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION (2003) Florida PTA supports the certification process for public school teachers be no less stringent than exists in Florida Statute 1012.56 effective January 1, 2003. As follows: the applicant must document receipt of a bachelor’s or higher

degree from an accredited institution of higher learning, or a non-accredited institution of higher learning that the Department of Education has identified as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor's degree, or higher. Each applicant seeking initial certification must have attained at least a 2.5 overall grade point average on a 4.0 scale in the applicant's major field of study. Further, each applicant must:

- Be of good moral character
- Be competent and capable of performing the duties, functions, and responsibilities of an educator.
- Demonstrate a mastery of general knowledge.
- Demonstrate a mastery of subject area knowledge.
- Demonstrate a mastery of professional preparation and education competence.
- The process for alternative teacher certification be no less rigorous than that for traditional teacher certification.

TEACHER PREPARATION (1980) The Florida PTA requests the Department of Education require the programs of teacher preparation in our colleges of education include components in classroom management, identification of student health and emotional problems and community relations, with demonstrated competency in these areas as well as teaching appropriate subject matter. Selection criteria should be established for the admission of students into these colleges.

In-service programs should offer courses which will prepare teachers for classroom management including maintaining good discipline.

TEACHER TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION (1980) The Florida PTA supports the retention of the certification of teachers as a state function and under no conditions should the responsibility for setting standards for training, licensing and regulation of the profession be delegated to a special interest group.

TEACHERS — CERTIFICATION FIELD (1987) The Florida PTA encourages school districts to make every effort to avoid assigning teachers to classes outside their fields of certification.

TELEVISION PROGRAMS AND COMMERCIALS (1984) Local PTAs and county councils should encourage parents to become more aware of network and cable television programs and commercials and the effect on young audiences.

TOLERANCE (1997) The Florida PTA urges its member associations to lead their communities in encouraging tolerance of differences among individuals and groups in schools and in their communities.

TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN IN COMMERCIAL VEHICLES (1986) The Florida PTA urges the Florida Legislature to require operators of any commercial vehicle used primarily to transport children to meet the licensing criteria defined in FS 234.091 General Qualifications, Transportation of School Children. In addition, the Legislature should require these operators to be at least 18 years of age, to have an annual physical examination which includes vision and hearing checks, and to demonstrate their ability to operate the vehicle.

TUBERCULOSIS TESTING (1997) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to amend Florida's Statute Chapter 232.032 to require all students entering Florida public schools to undergo routine testing for Tuberculosis; and

The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to require routine TB testing for all school employees.

TUBEROUS SCLEROSIS (1999) The Florida PTA urges all of its members to support efforts to increase the awareness of Tuberos Sclerosis.

VOLUNTEER LIABILITY (1991) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to limit and define the liability of school volunteers to diminish their concern with regard to personal liability associated with volunteer work so that the state may maximize this crucial human resource.

VOLUNTEER RELEASE TIME (1994) The Florida PTA urges the business community, including state and local governmental agencies, to allow employees to have paid release time to volunteer in local schools.

VOLUNTEERISM AND THE PTA (1980) Volunteerism has been the foundation of the PTA. To give freely of our time and energy for the welfare of children has been the core and center of every PTA project. From hot lunches to juvenile justice and from classroom aid to legislative lobbying, we have always pursued our goals, with the zeal that comes from devotion to our children. While recognizing the importance of other volunteer groups, it is well to remember that PTA's purpose is unique and no other group can really take its place. Although it should be interested and concerned about any and all work being done by school groups, the PTA has a major responsibility to be the accountable volunteer link between schools and the community, operating independently of the school system and without benefit of government funds or government control.

VOUCHERS (1998) The Florida PTA opposes education voucher proposals for public and non-public preschool, elementary, and secondary school students.

VOUCHER FUNDED SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY (2003) While continuing to oppose vouchers in all forms, that Florida PTA urges the Legislature to impose strict eligibility requirements on private institutions and nonpublic K-12 schools receiving public dollars through any state funded voucher, grant or scholarship programs, and at a minimum, require them to meet the same accountability standards at their cost as public schools, including, but not limited to:

1. School wide participation in any statewide assessment program, by mandating all current standardized tests, i.e., FCAT and Florida Writes;
2. Assignment of an annual school performance grade category designation and improvement rating, to be published in the Commissioner of Education's annual statewide assessment report;
3. Compliance with Florida Public Records Laws and requirement for independent audits to assess how taxpayer money is being spent.
4. Regulations to ensure private institutions and nonpublic schools are adequately equipped to meet the educational needs of their students.

WALKING DISTANCE TO SCHOOL (1991) The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to

define a reasonable walking distance as one mile between home and school/bus stop for students attending elementary schools.

WELFARE REFORM (1996) The Florida PTA supports changes to the state and national welfare systems that promote self-sufficiency while maintaining the entitlement status of programs protecting the health, safety and well being of children.

YOUTH GAMBLING (2005) The Florida PTA provides information and education to its membership on the prevalence, access and dangers of gambling among children and youth and the Florida PTA urges its county councils and local units to work with their district school boards to include education on youth gambling as a high risk behavior in their existing curricula and encourage schools to incorporate gambling resistance clubs.