

## Response to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in Schools

- Whereas, Research shows that over 40% of middle and high school students are victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment and these acts are vastly under reported, and
- Whereas, Research indicates that school is the most common location of peer sexual victimization, and
- Whereas, Sexual violence or sexual harassment have devastating effects on adolescents, negatively impacting their emotional and physical well-being, and depriving them of equal and free access to an education, and
- Whereas, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”), 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1681et seq., prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. Under Title IX, discrimination on the basis of sex includes sexual harassment or sexual violence. However, there is a lack of compliance with Title IX Federal law which requires schools to take immediate action to eliminate harassment and sexual violence, prevent its occurrence, and address its effects, now therefore be it
- Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations urge and support compliance with Title IX provisions concerning sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and be it further
- Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations encourage and collaborate with school administrations and community partners to present awareness and prevention programs that address sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools, including the responsibilities of school districts and the rights of sexual violence and sexual harassment victims under Title IX.

## Rationale

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the landmark civil rights legislation that bans sex discrimination in education, including sexual violence. When students suffer sexual assault and harassment, they are deprived of equal and free access to an education. The law requires schools to “take immediate action” to eliminate sexual harassment or sexual violence, “prevent its recurrence, and address its effects”. (Office of Civil Rights)

Yet 40 years after the adoption of Title IX, sexual harassment and sexual violence in our schools remains a problem with research showing that over 40% of middle and high school students have been victimized. Sexual violence in any form is harmful to children and can affect their physical and emotional health as well as their academic success.

In keeping with the Parent Teacher Association’s longstanding history of advocating for safe learning environments, PTA must take an active role to raise awareness and support sexual harassment and sexual violence prevention strategies including the enforcement of Title IX provisions concerning the sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools.