

## 2020/2021 Florida PTA Action Platform – Current Position Statements

### Position Statements Created by Florida PTA

**ARTS IN EDUCATION ESSENTIAL CURRICULA (2004) (2014)** The 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. The 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 field specific arts subject area and be aligned with the National Standards (No Child Left Behind) and the Sunshine State Standards. 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.

**CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDING (1991) (2012)** 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 traditional public school districts should be the first priority of PECO funding.

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (2019)** The Florida PTA provides information to its members and others with respect to the benefits of career and technical education for students at all levels of academic achievement, as well as for the general public. In addition, the Florida PTA urges the Florida Legislature and the United States Congress to increase funding for career and technical education programs, including registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, to provide for appropriate market-driven compensation for career and technical education instructors, flexibility in the expansion of career and technical education pathways, and recruitment of a diverse population of program enrollees so that all of Florida's residents will have the opportunity to access, fully participate in, and contribute to the state's economic prosperity.

**CASINO GAMBLING (1981) (2012)** 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) (2012)** 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 PROTECTION (1996) (2012)** 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.

**CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH (1992) (2012)** 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:

- Prevention programs which serve children from birth to preschool, in preschool programs and earlier;
- In-school student assistance programs to provide short-term intervention;
- Access to individual, family and group counseling in convenient settings and times;
- Intensive home-based services which address the needs of families in their natural environment; and
- Residential treatment, including crisis stabilization, inpatient facilities, therapeutic group and foster homes and post-treatment services.

**CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO LEGAL COUNSEL (2007) (2019)** The Florida PTA urges that the Legislature require qualified legal counsel for all children in all proceedings governed by Chapter 39, Florida Statutes (judicial proceedings that deal with the care, safety and protection of children.)

**CLASS SIZE REDUCTION (1994) (2012)** 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 teacher 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) (2012)** 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) (2012)** 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.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: Readiness to Start School (1998) (2012)** 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 PTAs 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 FUNDING AWARENESS (1996) (2012)** The Florida PTA directs its Board of Directors to provide information and training to its PTAs and County Councils on the history, the current status, and processes surrounding education funding. The Florida PTA urges its PTAs and County Councils to work within their communities to facilitate understanding of education funding issues at the state and local levels.

**EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF DYSLLEXIA AND OTHER SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES (SLD) (2018)** Florida PTA and its constituent associations support the use of evidence-based instructional approaches for students with dyslexia, currently defined as Structured Literacy, and evidence-based instruction for dysgraphia, dyscalculia and other Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). Florida PTA will work with their local school districts to research and to advocate for the adoption of evidence-based approaches, meaningful IEP goals, and educational policies that best serve students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and other Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). Florida PTA and its constituent associations support schools in implementing best practices in meeting the needs of students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and other Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) through practices such as early Resolved, intervention and differentiated instruction and to encourage accommodations and needed assistive technology through 504 Plans and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in all learning environments. Florida PTA recognizes that Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) have significant educational implications and encourage local and state education agencies and institutions of higher education to require pre-service and on-going post-service training on dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and other Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), the warning signs of dyslexia and appropriate instructional approaches as well as the use of early screening for dyslexia and successful approaches to communicating with parents.

**FLORIDA GUARDIAN AD LITEM SUPPORT (2007) (2019)** 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).

**FLORIDA TAX STRUCTURE (1997) (2012)** 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.

<p><b>FUNDING (1989) (2012)</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>FUNDING CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS (1991) (2012)</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>GUIDANCE PERSONNEL (Counselors and Occupational Specialists) (1980) (2012)</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>HAZARDOUS WALKING CONDITIONS (2000) (2012)</b> Florida PTA urges local school districts and municipalities to 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.</p>
<p><b>MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN FLORIDA SCHOOLS (2017)</b> The Florida PTA and its constituent associations call upon state and local policymakers and school districts to employ evidenced-based best practice ratios of school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses, who are most qualified to provide school-based mental health services. Florida PTA also urges the necessary resources and supports be provided to ensure students have access to the proactive continuum of mental health services and they be incorporated with a strong family engagement component.</p>
<p><b>PARENTAL CHOICE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS (1993) (2012)</b> 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 provide funding for transportation, be based on equal access and equal educational opportunities for all students, provide clear information to all parents, and provide increased opportunity for parental involvement in the education of their children.</p>
<p><b>PREVENTION (2001) (2012)</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>PROMOTING CIVIL CITATIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO YOUTH ARREST (2017)</b> The Florida PTA and its constituent associations support and advocate for the standardized use of youth civil citations as an alternative to arrest as well as encourage government and community organizations to provide quality programs, services, and resources to positively redirect and support youth who have been issued civil citations.</p>
<p><b>PTA REPRESENTATION ON FLORIDA BOARD OF EDUCATION AND RELATED ADVISORY GROUPS (2013)</b> The Florida PTA urges the Legislature, the Governor and the State Board of Education to include Florida PTA representation on state commissions, committees and task forces. The Florida PTA also urges the Governor and/or the Legislature to include Florida PTA representation on the Florida Board of Education.</p>
<p><b>PUBLIC EDUCATION CAPITAL OUTLAY (PECO) (1995) (2012)</b> The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to increase the rate and expand the application of the Gross Receipts Utilities Tax, as well as 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.</p>
<p><b>REFORM OF SCHOOL POLICIES REGARDING ZERO TOLERANCE (2015)</b> Florida PTA urges the Florida Legislature and school boards to revise disciplinary policies known as "zero tolerance" that mandate either suspension, expulsion or referral of students to juvenile or criminal court, without regard to the circumstances or nature of the offense or the students' history. In addition, Florida PTA urges school officials to exercise sound discretion, that is consistent with principles of due process, and considers the individual student and the particular circumstances of misconduct, and urges the state and school districts to adopt policies and procedures that enable such due process. Florida PTA also supports the development of prevention programs and alternatives to suspension, expulsion or referral that will improve student behavior and school climate without making schools dangerous.</p>

<p>REGISTERED NURSES FOR SCHOOLS (2001) (2012) The Florida PTA encourages and supports complete funding to supply a registered professional nurse to every one of the 2.8 million 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.</p>
<p>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY (1991) (2012) 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.</p>
<p>SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADES (1999) (2012) 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 significant student improvement in calculating school performance grades. Input 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.</p>
<p>SCHOOL TURNAROUND (2015) Florida PTA believes that school turnaround options should improve communities by focusing on the whole child and include high quality academics, supports and interventions, health and wellness, co-curricular activities, and parent/community engagement. Programs should address the needs of every child. Decisions on school turnaround must be made at the local level by school boards with the input of stakeholders, including parents, teachers, students, and community members, and school advisory councils. Florida PTA supports the open and transparent operation of the public school system. Public property and resources paid for by taxpayers must be protected. Turnaround schools must be operated in a manner that is fiscally accountable to the school district and the community.</p>
<p>SERVICE LEARNING (2008) (2019) 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.</p>
<p>SEXUAL ORIENTATION REPARATIVE THERAPIES AND YOUTH – CONVERSION THERAPY BAN (2019) The Florida PTA and its constituent associations will hold education programs to inform families and youth about the harmful impact of sexual orientation therapies on our LGBTQ youth. Florida PTA and its constituent associations advocate for and support legislation and policies that protect our youth from the harmful effects of therapies directed at changing sexual orientation.</p>
<p>STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL GOVERNANCE (2011) The Florida PTA urges all school district superintendents and school boards to include student representation on district advisory committees; and The Florida PTA urges all school boards to establish and maintain a program consisting of student advisors to the school board. In addition, Florida PTA urges the Legislature and the State Board of Education to establish and maintain a program consisting of student representatives or advisors to the State Board of Education.</p>
<p>SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS (1987) (2012) Substitute teachers should have at least two years of college.</p>
<p>SUMMER LEARNING LOSS (2014) Florida PTA and its constituent associations shall educate parents, administrators, school board members, teachers and communities about the impact of summer learning loss and the advantages of summer learning and enrichment programs. In addition, Florida PTA urges policy makers at federal, state and local levels to create policies and legislation that support and fund summer learning programs with emphasis on reading and math for disadvantaged youth. Florida PTA shall also encourage collaboration and partnerships between school districts, park and recreation departments, libraries, youth-serving organizations, community and faith-based organizations, businesses, and nonprofits to provide children and youth with summer learning activities and enrichment programs.</p>
<p>SUPPORT OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS TO REDUCE CHILDHOOD OBESITY POLICY (2013) The Florida PTA will encourage members to participate in their local school Health and Wellness committees to assist in the development and implementation of district and local School Wellness Policies; and The Florida PTA will promote and encourage the use of healthy fundraisers by its constituent organizations. The Florida PTA is dedicated to the reduction and prevention of childhood obesity in Florida. Florida PTA will continue to advocate in favor of regular physical activity and physical education in schools and support efforts to improve the nutritional value of foods and beverages served and sold in schools throughout the state.</p>

**SUPPORTING FLORIDA’S HOMELESS STUDENTS (2014)** Florida PTA and its constituent associations shall educate their communities about of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act which is designed to aid in the education of homeless children by providing comprehensive services necessary to guarantee equal educational opportunities. In addition, Florida PTA urges policymakers to implement and fully fund the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act provisions in all Florida school districts. Florida PTA also urges policymakers to establish an ample funding allocation for the Title 1, Part A set-aside and Title X, which are funding sources used to support the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

**TAX LIMITATION (1984) (2012)** 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) (2012)** 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) (2012)** 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) (2012)** 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.

**TEACHERS - CERTIFICATION FIELD (1987) (2012)** The Florida PTA encourages school districts to make every effort to avoid assigning teachers to classes outside their fields of certification.

**TESTING IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE (2018)** Florida PTA believes that the accurate assessment of each student’s English and native language and academic skills is necessary to ensure placement in the program that best meets the educational needs of that student. Florida PTA will work to educate its members, educators and legislators of the unique challenges English Language Learner students face in this mandated testing process, and encourages the Legislature to provide calls for additional funding that would accommodate subject matter testing of all English Language Learner students in the native language.

**VOUCHER FUNDED SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY (2003) (2013)** 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:

- School wide participation in any statewide assessment program, by mandating all current standardized tests, i.e., FCAT and Florida Writes;
- 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;
- Compliance with Florida Public Records Laws and requirement for independent audits to assess how taxpayer money is being spent.
- Regulations to ensure private institutions and nonpublic schools are adequately equipped to meet the educational needs of their students.

**Position Statements Created by National PTA and Selected as a Focus for Florida PTA**

**2020 CENSUS – FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS (1965) (2019)** The National Congress and all its divisions intensify their efforts to educate the public about public school needs and public support needed to assure funds adequate for quality education in every public school district of the United States.

**ASSESSMENTS (2016)** National PTA believes that high-quality assessments provide valuable information to parents, teachers and school leaders about the growth and achievement of their students. Assessment is a process of gathering information to guide educational decisions. A test is one tool that can be used in a comprehensive assessment system to evaluate and assess student growth and learning. National PTA also believes that neither one test, nor a single data point should ever be the sole determinant of a student’s academic or work future, such as graduation, admission, retention or tracking.

- State-determined accountability systems provide for multiple measures of student growth and achievement.
- States develop a strategic assessment system to eliminate unnecessary exams, in consultation with district leaders, educators and parents that is aligned with academic standards and supports college and career readiness.
- States obtain the necessary resources and have appropriate policies and procedures in place to develop, validate and

implement high-quality assessments with fidelity.

- States and school districts clearly articulate to parents the assessment and accountability system in place at their child's school. Parents must be notified through multiple communication efforts of required assessments, their purpose, when they will occur, and when results will be available. Additionally, families shall be notified on how educators will use assessment data and how parents can use the information to support their child's academic growth and achievement.
- States ensure assessment results are delivered to parents and educators in a timely, actionable and understandable manner.
- States provide clear and easily accessible information to parents, educators, school districts and the community regarding nonparticipation in state assessments and the consequences it may have on students, schools and educators. States should also collect data on the number and frequency of students who opt-out of state assessments and report on the impact to instructional practices, teacher and principal evaluations and school accountability measures.
- States and districts annually evaluate and review assessment systems to certify it accurately and fairly measures student achievement towards college and career standards and provides valuable data to parents, teachers and school leaders.
- States and school districts deliver professional development to teachers and principals to ensure assessment data is used appropriately to guide instruction and support evidenced-based interventions for identified students, subgroups of students and school improvement.
- School districts should work collaboratively with schools to design the assessment calendar to guarantee minimal disruption to classroom learning opportunities.
- Schools and families meaningfully engage in two-way communication regarding assessments, including how schools and families can work together to use assessment data to support student growth and learning.

**CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS (2018)** That National PTA and its constituent associations strongly encourage efforts to establish comprehensive community mental health providers to offer preventative and treatment services to children and adults and comprehensive school mental health programs that include adequate access to school psychologists, school counselors and school social workers

National PTA and its constituent associations advocate for ongoing teacher and administrator

training to improve the understanding of child emotional and mental health needs with emphasis on the importance of establishing a school climate conducive to good mental health.

National PTA and its constituent associations promote educational programs for parents and families to strengthen understanding and supportive home environment.

National PTA and its constituent associations support efforts to provide education and other supports for school staff and professional development to assist with addressing mental health issues with emphasis on early detection.

National PTA and its constituent associations support and encourage reducing the stigma of mental illness and build a community of understanding around children and youth mental health.

**DISTRACTED DRIVING (2012)** National PTA supports the adoption and enforcement of laws that restrict the manipulation of handheld and portable communication devices while driving. In addition, National PTA and its constituent associations shall collaborate with school districts, the state and federal departments of education, the state and federal departments of transportation and other organizations to promote education and awareness of the dangers and consequences of distracted driving. National PTA also urges their members, adults and students, to refrain from distracted driving and serve as a positive example for the safety of our youth.

**HEALTHY SLEEP FOR ADOLESCENTS (2017)** The National PTA and its constituent associations urges local stakeholders, policymakers, and national organizations to develop strategies and solutions which provide opportunities for sufficient, quality sleep for teens as well as support efforts of school districts to optimize sleep for students, to aim for start times in high school and middle school that allow students the opportunity to achieve optimal levels of sleep.

**HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (2018)** That National PTA and its constituent associations encourage all stakeholders in the educational system – teachers (both general and special education), parents, administrators, and members of the community – to have and maintain high expectations for all students, including students with disabilities, including the students holding high expectations of themselves.

**RECOGNITION OF LGBTQ INDIVIDUALS AS A PROTECTED CLASS (2016)** National PTA seeks and supports legislation that specifically recognizes LGBTQ as a protected group, addresses discrimination based upon sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. National PTA also seeks and supports legislation that creates safe, supported, and accepting environments and encourages states to incorporate standards regarding LGBTQ issues into curricula.

**RESPONSE TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT & SEXUAL VIOLENCE AFFECTING STUDENTS (2015)** National PTA urges and supports 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 compliance by recipients of federal funds with the provisions of Title IX. National PTA urges collaboration 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, presence awareness and prevention programs that address sexual harassment and sexual violence affecting students. This 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.

\*In accordance with Florida PTA Policies and Procedures adopted in January 2012, position statements older than 10 years will be moved to archive status unless reaffirmed as active positions of the Florida PTA. Justification for moving items to historical status sooner than 10 years includes: desired action accomplished, item no longer timely or relevant, or item replaced by more current State or National item on the subject.