



February 14, 2018

To: Members of the Delaware Joint Finance Committee

RE: Coalition for Delaware Kids Campaign

My name is Dr. Terri Hodges and I am President of the Delaware State PTA. Today I am here representing more than 6500 parents and teachers in the state of Delaware in **support of the Coalition for Delaware Kids Campaign.**

Current research shows socio-economic status is one of the key determinants of educational outcomes. Based on current measures of school readiness, we know that children from low-income families often start school already behind their peers who come from more affluent families. In addition, underserved students, including minorities and low-income students, attend and complete college at far lower rates than their peers. These students are suspended, expelled, and drop out at higher rates and are less likely to have access to strong teachers and challenging curricula. The academic gap widens as students move through the education system - eventually entering high school where it is determined that they are not college and/or career ready. The results can be even more devastating for these students after high school as they are often ill prepared to serve as successful, contributing members of our community.

This is why Delaware PTA supports the Coalition for Delaware's Kids Campaign as a holistic approach supporting educational equity and meeting the social, emotional and academic needs of at risk populations beginning as early as infancy and creating more opportunities for 3-4-year-old early education programs. This proposal also calls for directing more resources to our high poverty schools and implementing before and after school programs, as well as creating extended learning opportunities in the summer to help address summer learning loss & meet the unique needs of the students. Equally as important are the opportunities this proposal will provide for improving re-entry services for juveniles leaving the juvenile correctional system, as well as creating a high school equipped to meet the needs of students recovering from substance abuse.

We realize that many groups/organizations have a demonstrated need for extra funding and that you have an enormous task ahead of you. We implore you to invest in our kids, invest in our future - in Delaware's future by funding the Coalition for Delaware's Kids.

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