



## Legislative Priorities and Positions of The Delaware PTA

### 2017 Legislative Session

Legislative Priorities and Positions Legislative efforts are consistent with the purposes of the Delaware PTA, and shall include stewardship of legislation through the regulatory and policy implementation processes. The Delaware PTA Legislative priorities encompass legislative initiatives defined below.

**Mission:** To impact policy that benefits children by collaborating with decision makers on the development and implementation of legislative policies and initiatives in the areas of education, health and wellness and the judicial representation of Delaware's youth.

Delaware PTA will collaborate in creating policy, review and provide comment on policy and regulations, and take positions on legislation, regulation and/or policy as it relates to the overall mission of the Delaware PTA and National PTA to ensure the well-being and education of all children in Delaware.

Delaware PTA will inform membership and solicit the input of our members on policy issues that impact the well-being and education of all children in Delaware.

#### **Elementary and Secondary Education:**

1) Delaware PTA will advocate for inclusion in the ESEA re-authorization that state assessments will not be used as a single indicator for accountability in regards to school ratings, teacher accountability, or individual student accountability. Furthermore, Delaware PTA will continue to push for a multiple parts assessment system to replace using a statewide single test score.

2) Delaware PTA will push for an assessment system that measures growth from Fall to Spring, informs instruction for educators, provides immediate results for parents, students, and educators, and one that features data that parents can use and understand while providing specific indicators that students have mastered the standards as they move toward college and career readiness.

3) Delaware PTA will work to educate the General Assembly on how the Academic Framework Working Group and DESS is promoting an agenda that is may not always be in the best interest

of all children by providing representation from our association. Delaware PTA will continue to communicate with the US DOE

4) Delaware PTA will continue to advocate for more transparency from the Delaware DOE and The State Board of Education.

5) Delaware PTA supports full funding for programs under ESSA Every Student Succeeds Act. Delaware PTA will advocate for funding for Family Engagement Centers through ESSA funding. Delaware PTA will continue to empower the voice of the parent in the implementation of ESSA in Delaware.

6) Delaware PTA opposes any legislation that seeks to divert public money to private schools. Delaware PTA opposes school vouchers and will advocate to keep public money in public schools.

7) Delaware PTA supports an examination of the school board term limits with a suggestive staggering of terms. Furthermore, Delaware PTA supports that the state board of education change from appointment by the Governor to elected by the people. Additionally, Delaware PTA supports the recall of any school board member who demonstrates misconduct while in office whereby their actions prohibit the district from providing the best education for all their district students.

### **Early Childhood Education:**

1) Delaware PTA will advocate for resources and funding to be allocated for early childhood education. 2) Delaware PTA has long advocated that parents are children's first teachers. Delaware PTA will promote family engagement in education and promote the education of families in this arena. Delaware PTA will work with Delaware Department of Education to support training and education for parents and families in engaging them in their student's educational experience. Delaware PTA strongly encourages the inclusion of a family engagement component into all early childhood education programs. ( see ESSA and family engagement centers above)

### **Education Funding:**

- 1) Delaware PTA will advocate for a weighted unit funding formula to ensure that the neediest students are receiving the resources that they deserve.
- 2) Delaware PTA will advocate for equitable funding to meet the needs of all children including students with special needs, ELL students, students from high risk populations such as students living in high poverty, homeless students, and low income populations.
- 3) Delaware PTA will work to safeguard funding streams for disadvantaged populations and the students that are at the most risk
- 4) Delaware PTA will continue to support the community, public, and parent's right to have a vote in educational funding. Delaware PTA will support referendum voting by the community. In the case that The General Assembly continues to fund our schools via a raise

in our tax dollars through referendum that the vote remain in school buildings and that voting should not be permitted by US mail unless in the case of an absentee ballot

- 5) Delaware PTA will continue to advocate for separate funding for Guidance Counselors and related arts in curriculum (gym, music, art and library) in each school building where this does not exist and that such funding would be paid for 100% by the state and not be part of the unit count of a school building.

### **Special Education:**

- 1) Delaware PTA will continue to advocate that all special education students graduate from high school, college and career ready or the equivalent in such cases that it is deemed appropriate.
- 2) Delaware PTA will continue to advocate for full inclusion in all our school buildings.
- 3) Delaware PTA will work to ensure that the rights of children with special needs and their parents are fully protected.
- 4) Delaware PTA will advocate for special education funding for the K-3 years. Currently funding is only available for students identified as intense or complex. There is no state funding currently for students diagnosed as basic such as ADD, ADHD, Dyslexia, and other basic special needs. Delaware PTA will support all legislation to fund basic special education in the K-3 years so the local school districts are not assuming the costs.

### **School Safety:**

- 1) Delaware PTA supports legislation to establish uniform guidelines for the hiring and training of all Student Resource Officers ( SROs)
- 2) Delaware PTA seeks dedicated funding to enable localities to offer The Department of Justice or similar SRO training such that the school and public safety are not compromised.
- 3) Delaware PTA will work to ensure that student data privacy is protected. Delaware PTA will advocate for a parents' right to choose if/when their child's data can and will be used and shared.
- 4) Delaware PTA continues to support that students' who are on the internet are not being solicited by outside companies that promote an agenda that could harm or cause inappropriate actions to minors.
- 5) Delaware PTA will continue to advocate for the funds for School Resource Officers come from the state and not rest solely on the local school districts. Delaware PTA will continue to advocate for zero tolerance of bullying in our schools, and enforcement of school/district reporting guidelines of incidents of bullying
- 6) Delaware PTA will continue to advocate for increased accountability and enforcement of anti-bullying policies and procedures at the local and state levels.

**Child Health and Nutrition:**

- 1) Delaware PTA will continue to advocate for healthy and nutritious school lunches.
- 2) Delaware PTA will advocate that all schools serving students that have a high percentage of low income students provide free breakfast and lunch for every student.
- 3) Delaware PTA supports increased funding and resources for mental health services for youth including but not limited to mental health first aid and suicide prevention programs.
- 4) Delaware PTA supports healthy sleep for adolescents. Many school districts require very early start times in the secondary schools. Delaware PTA will advocate for later school start times for better student outcomes.
- 5) Delaware PTA supports that all high schools have a wellness center. Delaware PTA supports that wellness centers provide health and wellness services and guidance to students with parental consent when applicable. Currently the age of consent without parent approval is 12 years old. Delaware PTA will advocate to raise the age to 15 years when needed for parental consent in such situations where the student's life can be impacted.