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Delaware PTA 2018 Legislative Priorities and Positions

Legislative Priorities and Position Statements are legislative efforts that are consistent with the purposes, mission and vision of Delaware PTA and shall include stewardship of legislation through the regulatory and policy implementation processes. The Delaware PTA Legislative priorities encompass the 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 commentary 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.

1) Delaware PTA supports the reduction of school board terms from 5 to 4 years. Noting that this could increase the number of parents and community members that may commit to serve by reducing the term. **Rationale:** Serving on a school board is a wonderful way to engage parents in their local school districts. Furthermore, if a school board member proves to have interests other than the health and welfare of children this would reduce the amount of time they are elected to serve.

2) Delaware PTA will advocate for basic special education funding for the K-3 years. Currently funding is only available for students identified as intense or complex. **Rationale:** Currently, the state does not provide funding for students identified with basic special education needs 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 do not bear fiscal responsibility. Furthermore, funding the K-3 years for basic special education would result in a reduction of class sizes for general education classrooms. The state invests millions of dollars in the 0-3 years, 3-5 years and then stops at Kindergarten. Kindergarten through third grade are the years where early intervention can be most impactful.



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- 3) Delaware PTA supports that a student with an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) that meets the requirements of the plan, is awarded a “*State High School Diploma of modified performance standards*” rather than a “certificate of performance”. This recognizes the accomplishments of having attained a level of performance that is modified from the state graduation requirements but is aligned with the student’s established goals and performance outcomes.
Rationale: Awarding a diploma of modified performance standards will allow more opportunities for these students and increase their chances for employment and education, upon completion of high school.
- 4) Delaware PTA remains steadfast that the burden of proof for providing special education accommodations remain with the local school districts and not the family and/or guardian.
Rationale: The proof for the need for special education services and appropriate accommodations needs to remain a responsibility of the local school districts, not the family and/or guardian of the student.
- 5) Delaware PTA will continue to advocate for the state of Delaware to provide significant resources and incentives to local school districts to create connected communities, positive school climates and trauma-informed schools to support student health and success. that keep students healthy and in school.
Rationale: A positive school climate improves a student’s ability to learn and grow. Children should come to school excited to learn in a safe and nurturing school environment, without the fear of bullying, hunger or violence. Our association believes that all schools must be trauma-informed or sensitive schools. Furthermore, Delaware PTA supports state funded professional development for educators in all areas of trauma informed care.
- 6) Delaware PTA supports the protection of all undocumented students. Delaware PTA believes we must ensure that all children, including undocumented children, have the opportunity to reach their full potential and become productive members of society. Access to a free public education is the most effective method of securing this opportunity and should not be denied to any child.
Rationale: All undocumented school-aged children are entitled to have access to a high quality and free public K-12 education. Furthermore, undocumented school-age children may not be constructively denied a free education through coercion, illegal data collection, profiling or interference via threats of deportation. To allow such would be a foreclosure upon their future contributions to our society. Children should feel safe to attend school and not feel threatened that their families may be at risk of deportation. Furthermore, students of all ages K-12 should attend school to learn and not stay home due to a threat to their citizenship.
- 7) Delaware PTA supports the restoration of the 26 million dollars cut from the State Education budget. Delaware PTA believes that the state of Delaware should be investing in public education, not cutting the existing public education budget.



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Rationale: At the end of the last fiscal year 26 million dollars was cut from the state's education budget. When the budget was balanced, 55 million dollars was found. The cuts to education should be restored. The burden of these education costs should not fall on the local tax payers.

- 8) Delaware PTA supports The Hope Trust for Delaware's Kids, the Department of Justice's proposal to invest Delaware's windfall revenues in a long-term program to improve the lives of Delaware's at-risk youth.

Rationale: Budget cuts in education stand to have a disproportionate impact on Title I schools as they depend more heavily on federal dollars than higher income schools. The Hope Trust for Delaware's Kids will help restore funding for early intervention and supports for children birth to 24 months. This is not only critical for early identification of possible school supports and services, but it is critical in giving low income children the best possible start in life. Furthermore, this proposal will support quality early childhood options for low-income children, provide more after-school and summer enrichment programs and provide additional funding for Delaware's high-poverty schools. Delaware PTA believes that the proposal, as written, will allow for recipient schools/districts and/or community organizations, to develop a plan to sustain their programs beyond the four-year funding period. Each of the proposed initiatives under the Hope Trust for Delaware's Kids is supported by a current National PTA position statement or resolution as indicated below.