



Position Paper:
SCHOOL DISTRICT REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. was organized in 1897 to inform parents and educators of matters in all areas that affect children and youth. The New York State PTA and the National PTA build networks for their members to work together within the state and across the nation in those areas of concern. The New York State PTA works with community agencies which also have an interest in youth. The work of the New York State PTA and the National PTA has been performed within the parameters established by the PTA Purposes.

One of the policies of PTA is that the organization is noncommercial, and the projects and programs of all PTAs, therefore, should be educational in nature. Fundraising is NOT a major effort of PTA, a not-for-profit organization, as identified by Section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Revenue Code which allows PTAs their tax-exempt status.

It is necessary for PTA to raise funds for programs and leadership development, the educational components of PTA work. PTAs are not “booster clubs” for schools and school districts. Pressure from various school personnel may be placed on PTAs to finance programs and projects. Just as PTAs remain neutral during teacher negotiations, they must refrain from financial support of schools and school districts. PTA’s job is not to provide financial assistance to the schools but to provide an understanding of educational policies and goals to the community, particularly to the parents of children attending those schools. PTA members should be included on committees planning school district budgets. Budgets should provide funds for projects and programs that enhance the education and welfare of all the students. The PTA should support the passage of fiscally responsible budgets.

PTAs have found themselves faced with requests from school districts for items such as financing and managing hot lunch and security programs. While PTAs understand the importance of such programs, they cannot be responsible for them. PTAs should also be aware that there are inherent dangers in becoming involved beyond their own areas of educational concern. In addition to insurance problems, PTAs could find themselves acting as employers and being responsible for income taxes, workmen’s compensation, disability, and all the other legal concerns with which employers must deal.

The financial crises facing many governmental agencies and school districts are going to grow in number and severity in the years ahead. For more information, refer to the *NYS PTA Resource Guide*, Finance and Insurance Section, “Donations of Equipment to School Districts”. The funds needed to maintain present programs will increase as costs continue to escalate, thus making the future of new programs problematical.

PTA is an advocate for the welfare of all children and youth. It encourages the inclusion in both curricular and extracurricular activities of opportunities for youth to become the most that they can be as they prepare for careers, family living, and citizenship in our democracy.

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