**Position Paper:**

**CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN POVERTY: THE PUBLIC SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY**

There is a strong correlation between poverty and low student achievement. Children and youth who do poorly in school are less likely to graduate. They are less employable and more apt to perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

1. Children and youth in poverty frequently live in urban or rural areas. Schools with a higher poverty level tend to have lower achievement statistics. These school districts often lack local resources to provide anything more than minimal services for their low achieving student population.
2. Children and youth in poverty often have limited access to educational resources; they are taught in overcrowded, dilapidated surroundings with inequitable access to necessary supplies and technology.
3. One in five children in the State of New York live in poverty. Many children and youth living in poverty are educationally disadvantaged. Lower performing schools tend to have higher concentrations of minority and migrant students.

New York State PTA believes that schools reflect our democratic heritage and must take a leadership role in breaking the cycle of poverty. New York State PTA accepts the opportunity and the responsibility to advocate for the educational needs of all children and youth and their families in today’s demanding world. In collaboration with other organizations, we can impact public policy to address the human and financial resources needed for each child to achieve his or her potential.

New York State PTA requests that its membership:

Urge school board members and school administrators to:

1. Foster community-wide expectations that schools have a responsibility to teach all children and youth;
2. Set policies that protect children and youth from discriminatory discipline or educational placement;
3. Develop and recommend budgets that equitably allocate resources for all programs, across all grade levels, and in all schools within the school district;
4. Set policies that enforce providing information to parents/guardians regarding the educational programs of their children and opportunities for their involvement in the decision-making processes;
5. Develop programs which meet the needs of all students and maintain high expectations for each child;
6. Develop and monitor individual student achievement with sensitivity to individual learning modes and cultural as well as economic backgrounds.

Expect principals to:

1. Structure school settings and encourage teaching staff to address the many different learning needs for every child who is educationally disadvantaged;
2. Emphasize in-service education in the areas of classroom management and the development of instructional skills for working with children and youth who live in poverty and/or are educationally disadvantaged;
3. Provide and support opportunities and outreach programs for parents/guardians to understand their responsibilities and be engaged in their children’s education;

Ask teachers to:

1. Hold consistent, high expectations for all children and youth;
2. Recognize the individual needs of all children and youth;
3. Respect and support student diversity, inclusion, and cultural responsiveness;
4. Communicate with parents/guardians on a regular basis and encourage their engagement.

Encourage parents/guardians to:

1. Hold consistent, high expectations for all children and youth;
2. Be active education partners by communicating, advocating and supporting programs for students in poverty.

Call upon legislators to:

1. Provide equitable and adequate distribution of funds, to reduce significant disparities among schools and districts that serve children from poor and lower income families with limited resources.
2. Provide financial incentives to maintain funding for successful programs and maintain the school infrastructure to meet educational program needs;
3. Urge an increase in federal funding to supplement and support state and local intervention programs.

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Reaffirmed 11/91

Reaffirmed 02/00

Reaffirmed 08/06

Reaffirmed 07/13

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